

The Ministry of Isaiah Under Pekah of Israel and Ahaz of Judah, About 734 B.C.¹



[Note:] Under Jeroboam II, Israel had held sway over Syria as far north as “the entering of Hamath” (2 Kings 14:25); under Pekah, Israel shrank to the area south of Galilee and west of the Jordan River.

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The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH **INTRODUCTION**

1. Title. The title of the book of Isaiah in Hebrew manuscripts and in the LXX is “Isaiah.” In Luke 4:17 the book is called “the book of the prophet Esaias,” and in Acts 8:30, “the prophet Esaias.” In Hebrew Bibles the book is found in the section called “Prophets,” immediately preceded by the combined book of Kings and followed by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and “The Twelve.” See Vol. I, p. 37.

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

2. Authorship. The prophet Isaiah was the author of the book called by his name. The son of Amoz and a scion of the royal line, he was called to the prophetic office in his youth (5T 749), toward the close of the reign of Uzziah (Azariah, 790–739 B.C.), during the coregency of Jotham (PK 305). This would place the call between the years 750 and 739 B.C. His term of ministry continued for at least 60 years (PK 310), spanning the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (ch. 1:1; for regnal dates see Vol. II, p. 77). The fact that Isaiah never mentions Manasseh, whose sole reign began in 686 B.C., and that he was “one of the first to fall” in Manasseh’s massacre of those who remained loyal to God (PK 382; 2 Kings 21:16), implies that his ministry terminated soon after the death of Hezekiah in 686 B.C. If so, it must have begun not later than about 745 B.C. It is probable that the prophetic messages of Isa. 1–5 were given between the years 745 and 739, probably during the last year of Uzziah’s reign but prior to the vision of ch. 6 (PK 306). It was while Isaiah contemplated relinquishing his prophetic mission, in view of the resistance he knew he would encounter (cf. Jer. 20:7–9), that he beheld this vision of divine glory (PK 307) and in it found encouragement and confirmation of the divine commission already entrusted to him.

Isaiah was married and had two sons, Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isa. 7:3; Isa. 8:3). In Jerusalem, the chief scene of his labors, he became the court preacher and exercised considerable influence. For many years he was both political and religious counselor to the nation. His prophetic ministry, together with that of Micah and possibly also the indirect influence of Hosea in the northern kingdom, contributed to the reforms of Hezekiah. Manasseh, however, followed the evil policy of his grandfather Ahaz, abolished the reforms of his father Hezekiah, and took the lives of men who had encouraged the worship of the true God. According to the Babylonian Talmud, Isaiah was slain by Manasseh (see PK 382). Inspiration confirms the words of Heb. 11:37, that some were “sawn asunder,” as descriptive of the fate of Isaiah (see EGW, Supplementary Material, on Isa. 1:1).

For some 25 centuries no question arose concerning the authorship of the book of Isaiah. During the 19th century, however, higher critics in Germany began to challenge its unity of origin (see p. 85). The opinion of these men continued to gain ground until, at length, the view was almost universally accepted that the book had been written by at least two authors, a so-called first Isaiah, who wrote chapters 1–39 and who did his work at the close of the 8th century B.C., and a second Isaiah, or Deutero-Isaiah, who wrote chs. 40–66 toward the close of the Babylonian exile. There are many modifications of the above theory. Some critics assign more than half the book of Isaiah to the Maccabean period, that is, to the 2d century B.C.

One of the chief arguments of these critics for a composite authorship of Isaiah is that chs. 40–66 appear to them to be written, not from the standpoint of an author living at the close of the 8th century B.C., but from that of one who lived near the close of the Babylonian captivity. The mention of Cyrus by name (chs. 44:28; 45:1) is regarded by them as conclusive evidence that these chapters were written during the time of Cyrus, that is, in the second half of the 6th century B.C. This concept, of course, is based on the *a priori* assumption that prophetic foreknowledge is impossible.

The fact, however, that Isaiah mentions Cyrus is not an argument in favor of a late date for the book, but rather an evidence of the wisdom and foreknowledge of God. Throughout the book there are predictions concerning the future. Among these are

prophecies of the fall of the rulers of Israel and Syria (ch. 7:7, 8, 16), of the overthrow of Tyre (ch. 23), of the dismay of Assyria (chs. 14:25; 31:8; 37:6, 7, 29, 33–35), of the humiliation of Babylon (ch. 14:4–23), of the folly of trusting in Egypt (chs. 30:1–3; 31:1–3), and of the work of Cyrus (chs. 44:28; 45:1–4). Indeed, Isaiah sets forth God’s foreknowledge as eloquent testimony to His wisdom and power (chs. 41:21–23; 42:9; 43:9; 44:7, 8; 45:11, 21; 46:9, 10; 48:3, 5–8).

There are many evidences of unity of thought and expression between the first and last parts of the book. For instance, one characteristic of Isaiah is his use of the term “the Holy One of Israel” as a title for God. This expression occurs 25 times in Isaiah and only 6 times elsewhere in the OT. It is not exclusive, however, to any part of Isaiah, but is found 12 times in chs. 1–39 and 13 times in chs. 40–66. The title “the mighty One of Israel [or, “of Jacob”]” appears only in the book of Isaiah (chs. 1:24; 49:26; 60:16). Similarities of style and language between the first and second parts of Isaiah are far more impressive than its supposed diversities.

Though the subject matter and literary style of chs. 40–66 differ considerably from those of chs. 1–39, one basic theme runs through both sections—that of deliverance from political and spiritual foes, and from their oppression of body and soul. In the first section of the book, Isaiah, whose names means “the Lord is help,” or “the Lord is salvation,” presents deliverance from sin, Syria, Assyria, and other enemies through repentance, reformation, and faith in God. The second section deals with deliverance from Babylon, and eventually from the dominion of sin through faith in the coming Deliverer. A fundamental unity of thought and purpose thus pervades the entire book, despite the apparent difference in subject matter.

The first section of the book reaches a climax in deliverance from the armies of Assyria under Sennacherib. In the last section, prophetic vision looks forward to deliverance from Babylonian captivity. A similar transition occurs in the book of Ezekiel, with the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., from anticipation of, to restoration from, captivity. Furthermore, the early chapters of Isaiah record messages borne by Isaiah during his youth. The latter chapters of the book reflect a maturity of prophetic insight and literary style characteristic of age, and as a result constitute a masterpiece surpassing in depth of thought and majesty of expression even the fine passages of the earlier part of the book.

The earlier chapters of Isaiah are concerned with Assyrian invasions of Judah; the latter chapters look forward to deliverance from Babylon. Isaiah’s mission was to hold the kingdom of Judah steady as the northern kingdom vanished into Assyrian captivity. Through Isaiah the leaders were given an opportunity to understand the nature and significance of contemporary events. It was the divine purpose that Judah should profit from the sad fate of the northern kingdom, and as a result turn to God in sincere repentance. The tide of Assyrian invasion eventually all but submerged the little kingdom of Judah, and the might of Assyria was turned back from conquering Jerusalem by a signal act of God. But the men of Judah failed to heed the implied warning of history and the more explicit warnings of Jeremiah, that a similar fate awaited them unless they should amend their evil ways.

Accordingly, beginning with ch. 40, Isaiah anticipates captivity in Babylon, but with the assurance that eventual deliverance from Babylon is as certain as that recently experienced from Assyria. Furthermore, deliverance from national enemies becomes, for those who trust God, a promise of ultimate deliverance from the dominion of sin. All

differences between the two sections of the book may be fully accounted for on the basis of the background of changing historical events, the resulting change in the subject matter of prophecy, and a possible change in Isaiah's literary style with the passing years.

Although certain critics have assigned a considerable portion of the book of Isaiah to the Maccabean period, there is evidence that at that time the entire book existed as a single unit. Writing about 180 B.C., the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus (ch. 48:23–25), Jesus ben Sirach, credited various sections of the book of Isaiah to the prophet whose name it bears.

The most impressive evidence, however, that the book of Isaiah was regarded as a single unit centuries before Christ, comes from ancient Bible manuscripts dating from that period and found in 1947 in a cave near the Dead Sea. Among these are two scrolls of the book of Isaiah known as 1QIs and 1QIs. There is no evidence whatever that chs. 1–39 ever existed by themselves as an independent document apart from chs. 40–66; all evidence is to the contrary. There is every reason to believe that Isaiah the prophet was the author of the entire book that bears his name.

The NT frequently cites the book of Isaiah, but without making any distinction between chs. 1–39 and 40–66. The more extensive passages from Isaiah cited in the NT are as follows: It is evident that Christ and the apostles accepted the book of Isaiah as a single volume from the pen of the prophet Isaiah, and we are altogether safe in doing the same. Note especially Christ's references to Isa. 6:9, 10; 53:1 as cited in John 12:38–41, where He credits the prophet as author of both sections of the book; also, Rom. 9:27, 29, 33; 10:15, 16, 20, 21, where Paul does the same.

Reference in Isaiah	New Testament Citation
1:9	Rom. 9:29
6:9, 10	Matt. 13:14, 15
6:9, 10	John 12:40, , 41
6:9, 10	Acts 28:25-27
9:1, 2	Matt. 4:14-16
10:22, 23	Rom. 9:27, 28
11:10	Rom. 15:12
29:13	Matt. 15:7-9
29:13	Mark 7:6, 7
40:3	Matt. 3:3
40:3	Mark 1:3
40:3	John 1:23
40:3-5	Luke 3:4-6
42:1-4	Matt. 12:17-21
53:1	John 12:38
53:1	Rom. 10:16
53:4	Matt. 8:17
53:7, 8	Acts 8:32, 33
61:1, 2	Luke 4:18, 19
65:1, 2	Rom. 10:20, 21

The commentator on Isaiah is now in the fortunate position of having at his disposal two Hebrew manuscripts of this Old Testament book older by a thousand years than any other Hebrew Bible manuscripts previously known. These priceless documents, known as the Dead Sea scrolls of Isaiah, call, therefore, for special attention. The discovery, general characteristics, and importance of these and other Hebrew scrolls found in caves near the

Dead Sea since 1947 have been described briefly In Vol. I, pp. 31–34, and need not be repeated here.

Of the two Isaiah scrolls found in the first cave near *Khirbet Qumrân*, the one containing the complete book (sold first to the Syrian monastery in Jerusalem) is designated 1QIs; the incomplete scroll (sold to the Hebrew University) is called 1QIs. Both are now in the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem. Both, part of an Essene community's library, were stored in the cave before the end of the Jewish war (A.D.), as shown by professional excavation of the cave and of *Khirbet Qumrañ*. Both apparently date from the 2d or 1st century B.C.; 1QIs seems to be older than 1QIs. They are here described briefly since their more important variations from the Masoretic text are noted in the comments on the verses involved.

1QIs, the complete book, was published in facsimile and in modern Hebrew letters by Millar Burrows (*The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery*, vol. 1 [New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1950]), and resulted in many learned studies. On the whole this first Isaiah scroll shows great agreement with the long-familiar Masoretic text. However, the scribe of 1QIs was not a professional and his handwriting is less beautiful than that of 1QIs. He made many scribal errors. The impression is gained that some of his errors are due to mistaken hearing, since some sections seem to have been written from dictation. There is also evidence that the copy used as a prototype had certain lacunae, or gaps. Accordingly, when the scribe came to a missing passage he left a blank space in his copy and later copied in the missing section from another, and perhaps more perfect, copy. Sometimes the scribe underestimated the amount of missing matter, and the space he left for it proved insufficient. The result was that the inserted sections often ran over into the margin.

A few omissions from the text are noticeable where the eye of the scribe, or the dictator, skipped from a certain word to the same word a little farther on and missed all words between. This very common scribal error, frequent also in New Testament manuscripts, is called homoeoteuton. Additions to the text are very few and short—never exceeding a few words. There are many textual variations, but most of these are of a minor nature and most of them do not affect the meaning of the text. There are thousands of orthographic variations (differences in spelling), as might be expected in a manuscript a thousand years older than the next oldest Hebrew manuscript of the same book.

1QIs is much less complete than the other Isaiah manuscript, 1QIs. When Prof. E. L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem procured it from the dealers or discoverers, it was in bad condition. After it had been unrolled, it was found that the remnants of this scroll have preserved for us fragments of the following chapters of Isaiah 10; 13; 16; 19; 22; 26; 28–30; 35; 37–41; 43–66. The fragments containing text material up to chapter 37 are very small and therefore less informative than the last part of the book, which is reasonably well preserved, although every page shows large or small gaps in the leather, and therefore also in the text. The poor state of preservation of this scroll is especially lamentable, because what remains of it is far superior in quality to 1QIs.

Its script reveals that it is the product of an experienced scribe who had beautiful handwriting and who made hardly any scribal errors. Enough is preserved of this scroll to warrant the conclusion that the missing parts did not differ from those still extant, in their striking agreement with the Masoretic text. Throughout 1QIs only eight variations from

the Masoretic text have been considered of sufficient importance to be given attention in this commentary, and even these are of relatively minor significance (see on chs. 38:13; 41:11; 43:6; 53:11; 60:19, 21; 63:5; 66:17). The other variations are even less so.

The preserved portions show so few variations from the Masoretic text that some critical scholars at first refused to believe in the antiquity of a scroll that showed textual peculiarities these scholars had believed to be of much later origin. This second Isaiah scroll thus reveals that the text has been transmitted to us practically unchanged since Christ's time, while 1QIs exemplifies other contemporary, less-carefully-copied texts. 1QIs was edited by E. L. Sukenik and published posthumously by N. Avigad in *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, The Magnes Press, 1955).

From the *Qumrân* Cave 4 come fragments of 15 Isaiah MSS—14 written on leather, 1 on papyrus—only a few being yet (1976) published. See P. W. Skehan, *Biblical Archaeologist* 19 (1956), pp. 86, 87; Skehan, *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956), p. 59.

Qumrân Cave 5 produced one small Isaiah fragment (J. T. Milik, in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert, III: Les 'Petites Grottes' de Qumrân* [Oxford, 1962], p. 173); and the caves at *Murabba 'ât* one (2d century A.D.) containing parts of ch. 1:1–14 (*ibid.*, II: *Les Grottes de Murabba 'ât* [Oxford, 1961], pp. 79, 80).

Isaiah was apparently a very popular book at *Qumrân*, for more examples from it were found in the 11 caves there than from any other Bible book except Deuteronomy, of which there were two more examples than of Isaiah.

3. Historical Setting. The book of Isaiah is definitely dated, and the period from which it comes is well known in Near Eastern history. Isaiah was called to his prophetic office prior to the time he was accorded the vision of divine glory recorded in ch. 6, and carried on his ministry during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa. 1:1). According to the tentative chronology employed in this commentary (see Vol. II, pp. 77, 84, 86), Uzziah died about the year 739 and Hezekiah died in 686, succeeded by his son Manasseh. The kings of Assyria during this period were as follows: Tiglath-pileser III (745–727), Shalmaneser V (727–722), Sargon II (722–705), Sennacherib (705–681), and Esarhaddon (681–669). These kings were the most powerful rulers Assyria ever produced. Thus Isaiah did his work during the height of Assyrian supremacy, when it appeared that Assyria might soon gain complete control of the Eastern world. Tiglath-pileser III began a series of campaigns against the surrounding nations, as a result of which more and more of the Near East was brought under Assyrian control. Assyria came to be regarded as the great terror of the world, and no country appeared strong enough to withstand her might.

In 745 Tiglath-pileser invaded Babylonia, in 744 he marched against the northeast, and from 743 to 738 he engaged in tremendous campaigns against the northwest and west that brought him into conflict with Menahem of Israel and “Azriau from Iauda” (probably Azariah [Uzziah] of Judah). Azariah seems to have been the moving spirit in a major coalition of Western nations aimed at preventing Assyria from gaining control of the Mediterranean area. In 737 Tiglath-pileser's campaign was again directed to the northeast, against the region of Media. But in 736 he was back once more in the northwest, where he engaged in a desperate five-year struggle to bring Western Asia

completely under his control. In 735 his campaign was directed against Urartu, in the region of modern Armenia; in 734 he warred against Philistia, and in 733 and 732 against Damascus. In 731 he was once more in Babylonia, and in 730, according to the record, he remained at home. But in 729 he was again in Babylonia, where he “took the hands of Bel” and thereby became king of Babylon under the reigning title of Pulu (see Vol. II, p. 61). In 727 there was another campaign against Damascus. For further information on the reign of Tiglath-pileser, see Vol. II, pp. 60–62.

Although the records of Shalmaneser V (see Vol. II, p. 62) are very incomplete, it is known that his major campaign was against the nation of Israel. He besieged Samaria for three years, 725 to 723 inclusive, when the city was taken (723/722) and the nation of Israel disappeared forever.

Sargon II (see Vol. II, pp. 62, 63) may have been in command of the army that took Samaria in 723/722. He began to reign in 722/721 and became, perhaps, the greatest military monarch of Assyrian history. He engaged in a series of campaigns against the northeast, Babylonia, the northwest, and the Mediterranean coastlands. In 720 he put down uprisings in the northwest and west, and in 715 he subdued certain Arab tribes and received tribute from various obscure Egyptian rulers. In 711 he sent his tartan (see on 2 Kings 18:17) to put down an uprising in Ashdod (cf. Isa. 20:1). In 709 Sargon became king of Babylon.

Sennacherib (see Vol. II, pp. 63–65) began his reign in 705, and in 703 brought about the defeat of Merodach-baladan of Babylon. In 701 he embarked upon his famous “third campaign,” which took him against Phoenicia, Philistia, and Judah. Practically all Asiatic countries in the Mediterranean area, including Moab, Ammon, and Edom, were subdued and forced to pay tribute. The campaign, however, was not an unqualified success, owing to the fact that Jerusalem was not taken. Sennacherib evidently returned to the west in another campaign not mentioned in Assyrian records (see on 2 Kings 18:13), in which he again threatened Jerusalem, but was forced to return to Assyria after the annihilation of his army by an angel of the Lord (Isa. 37:36, 37).

Egypt and Babylon were comparatively weak during this period, but nevertheless exerted themselves at times against Assyrian aggression. Merodach-baladan of Babylon was particularly active during the reigns of Sargon and Sennacherib, and Taharka of Egypt led an army against Sennacherib during his second invasion of Judah (see on 2 Kings 18:13; 19:9).

4. Theme. Isaiah lived in a troubled world. For both Judah and Israel it was an era of peril and crisis. The people of God had fallen deeply into ways of sin. Under Azariah (Uzziah) in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel both nations had grown strong and prosperous. But material prosperity brought spiritual decline. The people forsook God and His ways of righteousness. Social and moral conditions were much the same in both nations. Everywhere there was miscarriage of justice, for magistrates judged for reward and rulers were primarily interested in pleasure and personal gain. Greed, avarice, and vice were the order of the day. As the rich became richer the poor became poorer, many sank into the depths of poverty and were reduced to the status of slaves. The social and moral conditions of the times are graphically depicted by Isaiah and his contemporaries, Micah, Amos, and Hosea. Many of the people forsook the worship of Jehovah and followed the heathen gods. Others clung to the outward forms of religion but knew nothing of its true meaning and power.

Isaiah warned the people that such conditions could not long endure. Jehovah would withdraw Himself from a people who, though they professed to pursue righteousness, followed ways of evil. He caught a vision of the holiness of God and the nation's desperate need of becoming acquainted with Him and His ways of righteousness, justice, and love. He saw God seated upon His throne, exalted and supreme, yet profoundly interested in the affairs of earth, calling upon men to repent, ever willing to forgive, but bound by His own righteous character to judge those who persisted in evil ways. Isaiah pointed out the fact that the path of righteousness was the pathway of life, peace, and prosperity, but that the way of wickedness was fraught with trouble and woe. He endeavored to teach the people the true meaning of religion and the true nature of God. Appeals were made for a purer and better world. The nation was warned of the fact that continuance in the way of evil would result in speedy destruction. God would employ the Assyrians as His tool to execute justice upon a nation of hypocrites that decreed unrighteous decrees, turned aside the needy from judgment, took away the rights of the poor, made widows their prey, and robbed the fatherless. For such, Isaiah made it clear that the day of visitation and desolation would surely and quickly come.

Isaiah set forth the fact that the entire world was ruled by one God, a God who required righteousness, not only of the Hebrews, but of all the nations of earth, and who would judge all peoples who persisted in their evil ways. The Lord's judgments would fall upon Assyria and Babylon, upon Philistia and Egypt, upon Moab, Syria, and Tyre. Ultimately the whole earth would be brought to utter ruin because of its iniquity. God alone would be exalted, and His people would worship Him in a new world of perfect joy and peace.

Isaiah was a statesman as well as a prophet. He deeply loved his nation, and spoke with courage and conviction against any course of action that was not in harmony with the national interest. He saw the folly of relying upon Egypt for help, and called the attention of the leaders of Judah to the fact that the counsel of their wise men would become confused and that Egypt itself would be divided, with one city fighting against another and every man fighting against his neighbor.

He counseled against the folly of relying upon worldly alliances for strength. He stressed the fact that the counsel of men would come to nought, and that only those who placed their reliance upon God would ultimately prevail. The people of God would find their strength in having His presence in their midst. But they refused the offer of divine mercy and protection.

Despite impending ruin, Isaiah constantly referred to a remnant who would be faithful to the Lord and who would, accordingly, be saved. Except for this remnant, the professed people of the Lord would be utterly consumed, like Sodom and Gomorrah. The remnant, however, would place their trust in the Holy One of Israel and would learn to walk in His ways.

Isaiah constantly refers to the Lord as "the Holy One of Israel." Being holy, He required that His people likewise be holy, and being righteous, He could not tolerate iniquity. Isaiah looked forward to new heavens and a new earth, to a new Jerusalem, which would be "the city of righteousness" (Isa. 1:26). For Isaiah, holiness involved more than a scrupulous observance of the ceremonies and ordinances of religion. These, in fact, were offensive to the Lord unless they were accompanied by a reformation of character and a holy, blameless life.

As far as Israel was concerned, it is evident that Isaiah expected that only a few individuals would escape the imminent doom. For Judah, however, he held out hope that there would be an escape from impending perils. He made it altogether clear, nevertheless, that the only path of safety lay in a return to God and to His ways of righteousness and holiness.

In the latter part of his book, chs. 40–66, Isaiah sets forth one of the most striking pictures of Israel and Israel's God found anywhere in the Bible. Here is Inspiration's most poignant description of Christ as the suffering Saviour (ch. 53). Here is one of the Bible's most revealing pictures of the infinite greatness and goodness of God. Here also is set forth the great mission of the church. Isaiah saw clearly that Christ would come as a "light to the Gentiles" and that His message of salvation would eventually go "unto the end of the earth" (ch. 49:6). He called upon Zion to awake and to put on her glorious garments (ch. 52:1), to enlarge the place of her tent and to stretch forth the curtains of her habitations in preparation for that glorious hour when she would inherit the Gentiles and cause the desolate cities of earth to be inhabited (ch. 54:2, 3). He bade her to arise and shine, for the glory of the Lord Himself would arise upon her and Gentiles would come to her light and kings to the brightness of her rising (ch. 60:1–3). For principles of interpretation, see pp. 25–38.

Isaiah is appropriately called the Messianic prophet. No other seems to have had so clear a picture of the holiness and greatness of God, of the person and mission of Christ, and of God's glorious purpose for His church. Isaiah is rightly regarded as the king of Israel's celebrated prophets, and his writings the masterpiece of all prophetic writings.

5. Outline.

- I. Isaiah Called to Combat National Apostasy, 1 to 6.
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 - B. An appeal to return to God, 1:2–31.
 - 1. Israel's revolt and God's corrective punishment, 1:2–9.
 - 2. The futility of formalism in religion, 1:10–15.
 - 3. Blessing for obedience, judgment for continued rebellion, 1:16–31.
 - C. The divine plan for Judah; its failure, 2 to 5.
 - 1. The ingathering of the Gentiles, 2:1–5.
 - 2. Failure of Judah, 2:6–9.
 - 3. The great day of God, 2:10–22.
 - 4. Failure of the leaders of Judah, 3:1–15.
 - 5. Condition of the people, 3:16 to 4:1.
 - 6. Deliverance and restoration for the righteous remnant, 4:2–6.
 - 7. God's disappointment at Judah's failure, 5:1–7.
 - 8. A catalogue of Israel's transgressions, 5:8–25.
 - 9. Divine retribution, 5:26–30.
 - D. Isaiah: God's messenger to an apostate nation, 6:1–13.
 - 1. The vision of God's majesty, 6:1–7.
 - 2. Confirmation of Isaiah's call and commission, 6:8–13.
- II. Deliverance From Syria and Assyria, 7 to 12.
 - A. Isaiah's message to Ahaz, 7.
 - 1. Deliverance promised from Israel and Syria, 7:1–9.
 - 2. The sign of deliverance, 7:10–25.

- B. The predicted Assyrian invasion of Judah, 8 to 10.
 - 1. The sign of invasion, 8:1–8.
 - 2. Judah to trust in divine, rather than in human, power, 8:9–22.
 - 3. Ultimate deliverance through the coming of Messiah, 9:1–7.
 - 4. Continuing impenitence and corrective punishment, 9:8 to 10:4.
 - 5. The fall of Assyria, the rod of God’s anger, 10:5–34.
- C. The Messianic kingdom, 11; 12.
 - 1. Deliverance and restoration through the Messiah, 11:1–9.
 - 2. The gathering of the Gentiles and of Jewish exiles, 11:10–16.
 - 3. A song of deliverance, 12:1–6.
- III. Deliverance From Babylon and Other Nations, 13 to 23.
 - A. A solemn message concerning Babylon, 13:1 to 14:23.
 - 1. The desolation of Babylon, 13:1–22.
 - 2. The deliverance of Israel from Babylon, 14:1–3.
 - 3. Downfall of the king of Babylon. 14:4–23.
 - B. A solemn message concerning Assyria, 14:24–28.
 - C. A solemn message concerning Philistia, 14:29–32.
 - D. A solemn message concerning Moab, 15; 16.
 - E. A solemn message concerning Damascus (Syria), 17.
 - F. A solemn message concerning Ethiopia, 18.
 - G. A solemn message concerning Egypt, 19; 20.
 - H. A solemn message concerning Babylon, 21:1–10.
 - I. A solemn message concerning Dumah (Seir), 21:11, 12.
 - J. A solemn message concerning Arabia, 21:13–17.
 - K. A solemn message concerning Judah and Jerusalem, 22.
 - L. A solemn message concerning Tyre, 23.
- IV. Deliverance From the Dominion of Satan: The Great Day of God, 24 to 35.
 - A. Desolation of the earth, 24.
 - B. Deliverance of God’s people, 25 to 27.
 - 1. A song of praise and victory, 25.
 - 2. A song of confidence in God, 26:1 to 27:1.
 - 3. A song of the Lord’s vineyard, 27:2–6.
 - 4. The gathering of the remnant of Israel, 27:7–13.
 - C. A solemn warning to Israel and Judah, 28; 29.
 - 1. Woe to Ephraim (Israel), 28:1–6.
 - 2. A warning to the leaders in Jerusalem, 28:7–29.
 - 3. A warning to the city of David, Ariel (Jerusalem), 29:1–17.
 - 4. The redemption and restoration of Jacob, 29:18–24.
 - D. The folly of reliance on Egypt, 30; 31.
 - 1. Woe to those who trust in Egypt, 30:1–14.
 - 2. Mercy for those who trust in God, 30:15–33.
 - 3. The defeat of Egypt and Assyria, 31.
 - E. The Messianic kingdom, 32 to 35.
 - 1. A king reigns in righteousness, 32; 33.
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- V. Historical Interlude, 36–39.
 - A. The Assyrian invasions of Judah, 36; 37.
 - 1. Rabshakeh's first message to Hezekiah, 36:1 to 37:7.
 - 2. Rabshakeh's second message to Hezekiah, 37:8–13.
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CHAPTER 1

1 *Isaiah complaineth of Judah for her rebellion. 5 He lamenteth her judgments. 10 He upbraideth their whole service. 16 He exhorteth to repentance, with promises and threatenings. 21 Bewailing their wickedness, he denounceth God's judgments. 25 He promiseth grace, 28 and threateneth destruction to the wicked.*

1. *The vision of Isaiah.* Isaiah's own title for the entire book. The term "vision" here denotes the revelation itself rather than the process by which it was imparted. In earlier times a prophet was called a "seer" (1 Sam. 9:9), but the term eventually fell into disuse. Prophets, nevertheless, continued to be seers in the sense that, with inspired insight, they were able to see things not revealed to common men. In vision the eyes of the prophet pierce the veil that separates this world from the world of the spirit, and see such things as the Lord sees fit to reveal to him. The Lord might reveal the significance of current events, the shape of things to come, or the divine purpose concerning individuals or nations. Warning, admonition, and instruction were frequently given. All of these are found in Isaiah's "vision." In the "vision of Obadiah" (Obadiah 1) and "the book of the vision of Nahum" (Nahum 1:1) the Lord revealed to those prophets His purpose concerning Edom and Nineveh. Isaiah's visions were chiefly concerned with Judah and Jerusalem, but also dealt with the surrounding nations and with the world as a whole. In "the vision of Isaiah" it is our privilege to see things as God sees them and chose to reveal them to us through His prophet.

The son of Amoz. The only occurrence of this name in the Bible. Nothing further is known of Isaiah's father. The name Amoz should not be confused with Amos. In Hebrew the two are distinctly different.

Concerning Judah and Jerusalem. See chs. 2:1; 3:1; 4:3; 5:3; 40:2; 52:1; 62:1; 65:9, 19. Isaiah's messages were addressed primarily to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, and were intended for their benefit. Many of the messages were probably spoken directly to the people in the form of sermons.

In the days. According to the chronology employed in this commentary, Uzziah died in 740/739 B.C., and Hezekiah in 687/686 (see p. 88).

2. *Hear, O heavens.* See on Deut. 32:1; cf. Micah 6:1. Isaiah's first discourse opens with an indictment of the professed people of God. Their utter failure to appreciate and profit by the unprecedented opportunities afforded them as a nation is amazing beyond words. As it were, Isaiah calls upon the inhabitants of heaven to witness the extraordinary spectacle—a literary device similar in purpose to that of Joel (ch. 1:2, 3), designed to impress the dull senses of the people with the enormity of their transgression.

The inhabitants of other worlds are acquainted with God's law and know of the rebellion of the inhabitants of this world against Heaven. They understand the plan of salvation and know of the opportunities granted to Israel as the chosen people of God. As it were, God calls upon them as witnesses to the astounding situation among those for whom He has done so much and who have been so utterly unmindful of Him. Before the universe the rebellious people of God stand guilty, and God is justified in the course He is about to take against the rebels.

I have nourished. The relationship between God and His people has been that of father and son. Everything a father could do for his children, God has done for His people. Being the recipients of His fatherly care, God's people should have accepted the responsibilities of sonship along with its privileges.

Rebelled. They renounced the authority of their Father in heaven and ignored the requirements He made of them.

3. The ox. Domestic animals know who supplies them their daily provender. Even unthinking brutes know where to find their food, and consequently acquire a certain attachment for the one who provides for them. But not so the people of God! They have been guilty of the most ungrateful stupidity, unmindful and unappreciative of their heavenly Father's tender care. They have not even shown the intelligence of dumb animals.

Israel doth not know. The term "Israel" here refers specifically to Judah in the sense that, as descendants of Jacob, they are heirs to the promises made to the fathers of the nation (see on vs. 1, 8).

4. Ah sinful nation. The very ones God had chosen to be "an holy people" unto Him (Deut. 14:2) had become a sinful nation. Ingratitude for the blessings bestowed upon them was the cause of their unholy state (see on Deut. 8:10–20; Hosea 2:8, 9; Rom. 1:21, 22). Forgetting God as the giver of the good things they enjoyed, they became openly apostate and flagrantly disobedient. Negative forgetfulness developed into positive rebellion.

Seed of evildoers. See on ch. 5:4. They who might have been an "holy seed" (ch. 6:13) became an evil plant producing worthless fruit.

Forsaken the Lord. That is, in preference for another master, the prince of evil (see on John 8:44).

Provoked. Divine love "is not easily provoked" (Cor. 13:5; cf. Eze. 18:23, 31, 32; 2 Peter 3:9), but Israel had so spurned God's grace and so disregarded His precepts that He could no longer bear with them without denying His own character and confirming them in their evil ways.

The Holy One of Israel. A favorite expression of Isaiah. He uses it altogether 25 times, as compared with only 6 by all other OT writers. When Isaiah first saw God in vision, seated upon His throne, he also heard the angelic choir singing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (ch. 6:3). The holy character of God made a deep impression upon the prophet. He recognized God as, above all else, a holy being, and aspired to be like Him. Henceforth, Isaiah's great task in life was to keep before Israel a picture of the holiness of God and the importance of putting away sin and striving earnestly for holiness of life.

Gone away backward. Instead of drawing ever closer to God and walking with Him, they were estranged from Him. They veered ever further from the pathway of holiness. Hosea, a contemporary of Isaiah, commented mournfully that "Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer" (Hosea 4:16).

5. Why? Or, "where?" The body is so covered with lacerations and bruises that the father hesitates to administer further punishment, though it is needed, and in mercy prefers not to strike the son where the wounds of previous beatings have not healed.

Stricken any more. By their sins the professed people of God had brought woe upon themselves. The deeper they went into sin, the greater the weight of woe they took upon themselves (see ch. 5:18). Isaiah endeavored to reason with them, asking why they chose to pursue so foolish a course of action. The picture is of a persistently rebellious son who has suffered beating after beating for his misdeeds until his entire body is lacerated.

Ye will revolt more and more. Rather, “that ye continue to revolt.” Isaiah was not predicting rebellion, but commenting on the fact that persistence in evil had occasioned the continuing strokes of corrective punishment from which they suffered.

6. No soundness in it. The entire body suffers. Wherever Isaiah looked in Jerusalem and Judah he saw evidences of the results of transgression.

Putrifying sores. That is, open, festering, and bleeding sores. Sin is a loathsome thing that defies human remedies. It produces, as it were, a mass of infected, open sores filled with purulent matter and neither bandaged nor treated with “ointment”—commonly olive oil in Palestine. Not only is Israel inwardly sick, but outwardly it reveals the fearful effects of the poison that has been at work. The nation is in a critical, disordered state; the patient is about to perish in his loathsome condition.

7. Your country is desolate. From his figurative description of the land (vs. 2–6) the prophet turns to a literal description. The picture here given aptly represents the situation of Judah at the time of the Assyrian invasions. With their customary ruthless cruelty the Assyrians had swept through the country, burning, pillaging, and killing. Many of the strong cities had been taken, countless small villages had been smitten, and much of the land had been reduced to a desolate waste. It appeared that the end was not far away.

It is desolate. A scroll from *Qumrân* Dead Sea scroll 1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, p. 86), reads “its desolation is over it.”

8. The daughter of Zion. That is, Jerusalem (see Lam. 2:8, 10, 13, 18; Micah 4:8, 10, 13). Zion was originally the ancient Jebusite stronghold, the city of David (2 Sam. 5:7; 1 Kings 8:1; see on Ps. 48:2), but later the name was applied in an extended sense to the entire city. Cities with their inhabitants, thought of in a poetical sense, are frequently referred to as women (see Isa. 47:1; Ps. 45:12; Lam. 2:15).

A cottage. That is, a hut or booth in which the keeper of the vineyard or members of his family dwelt during the vintage season. Those dwelling in such structures were, of course, isolated from the rest of the community and unprotected. Thus it was with Jerusalem during the period in question.

A lodge. Cucumbers and similar plants were common in the East. A booth was often erected in the field, where the caretaker would live during the summer to keep watch over the crops against thieves.

A besieged city. At the time of Sennacherib’s invasion Jerusalem was literally surrounded by the Assyrian armies. It alone stood when all the rest of the land of Judah had fallen into enemy hands.

9. The Lord of hosts. This is the divine title used by the angels in Isaiah’s vision of the glory of God (ch. 6:3). It refers to God as commander of the hosts, or armies, of heaven.

Small remnant. All of Judea, except Jerusalem, fell into enemy hands. The capital alone stood, seemingly insecure and in desperate peril. Except for this “small remnant” the nation of Judah would have met its doom as certainly as Sodom and Gomorrah.

10. Ye rulers of Sodom. The title “Sodom,” here figuratively applied to Judah in view of the fact that similar conditions now prevailed there, stands as a terrible indictment of the nation that professed to rule in the name of God. The rulers of the country had strayed so far from the Lord that, in policy and practice, they differed but little from the rulers of the most sinful nations on earth. Accordingly, a most solemn summons was now

addressed to them, a message from God that involved the doom of the entire nation unless it repented.

11. To what purpose? Judah was still, outwardly, a very religious nation. Great numbers of sacrifices were offered at the Temple, but there was little true religion. While maintaining the external forms of religion the professed people of God had forgotten what it was that God really wanted of them. They were willing to offer sacrifices, but not to give their hearts to the Lord. They knew the forms of religion, but they did not understand their need of a Saviour or the meaning of righteousness. Isaiah endeavored to bring the people to their senses and to cause them to realize the folly of their course. By a series of pointed questions he hoped to bring home to them the fact that a religion consisting only of outward forms was an offense in the sight of God. Throughout the ages God's spokesmen have endeavored to make clear that what God requires is obedience rather than sacrifice, righteousness rather than ritualism (see 1 Sam. 15:22; Ps. 40:6; 51:16–19; Jer. 6:20; 7:3–12; 14:12; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21–24; Micah 6:6–8).

12. To appear before me. To “appear before God” was the normal phrase for visiting the Temple at the great religious services (Ps. 42:2; 84:7; Ex. 34:23). The Hebrews rightly believed that when they came to the Temple they came into the immediate presence of God. It is true that the sanctuary had been built in order that the Lord might dwell among them (Ex. 25:8). But it is not necessarily true that everyone who came to the Temple also entered into the presence of God. Through Isaiah the Lord proclaims that He dwells “in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isa. 57:15).

13. Vain oblations. Sacrifices offered without contrition and genuine repentance were offered in vain (1 Sam. 15:22; Matt. 5:24; Mark 12:33). They were valueless.

An abomination. Instead of being delighted with the offering of sweet incense before Him the Lord was highly displeased. The formalities of religion mean nothing when its true spirit is lacking. God has made it clear that where obedience is lacking, even prayer is an abomination to Him (Prov. 28:9).

New moons and sabbaths. The sacred days here mentioned are coupled in such references as 2 Kings 4:23; 2 Chron. 8:13; Amos 8:5. It was an essential part of Hebrew religion to observe these sacred days. They had been appointed by the Lord Himself, and it was He who had required Israel to observe them (Ex. 23:12–17; Lev. 23; Num. 28; 29; Deut. 16:1–17). But the outward observance of these forms of religion was not enough. Ritual and ceremony are without meaning when righteousness is lacking. God made it clear that the formal observance of the sacred days He Himself had commanded was offensive when obedience was lacking.

It is iniquity. The words “it is” are not in the Hebrew. The latter part of v. 13 would preferably read, “I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn meeting.” The thought is that the solemn services of religion, when accompanied by a life of iniquity, are an offense to the Lord. At the time of Isaiah the Hebrews were “long” on the forms of religion but “short” on righteousness. Many who strictly observed the formal requirements of the ceremonial law openly violated the solemn commands of the law of God. Their course was a mockery of religion and a disgrace in the sight of God.

14. My soul hateth. God was speaking to a group of people who were outwardly very religious. They engaged in the ceremonies of religion because they thought in this way to earn the favor of God. But the Lord informed them that He was highly displeased with

their course of action—He hated the observance of their appointed feasts, He rejected their worship, and resented their hypocritical pretense. They were actually defying God by refusing to walk in His ways, and no cloak of religious formalism could cover their sins.

15. When ye spread forth your hands. When the Hebrews prayed they frequently stretched out their hands toward God (see Ex. 9:29, 33; 17:11; 1 Kings 8:22; Ezra 9:5; Job 11:13; Ps. 88:9; 143:6).

I will not hear. Compare Ps. 66:18; James 4:3. To be heard, prayer must be sincere. The prayers of hypocrites will not be heard (Matt. 6:5; Luke 18:14). Prayers may be long and frequent, yet be of no avail (Matt. 6:7). The prayers of evildoers whose hands are stained with blood and who persist in their evil ways will not reach the throne of grace. The Hebrews in the days of Isaiah appeared outwardly to be a very religious people who made much of prayer, but they refused to forsake their sins. Their prayers came from the lips but not from the heart. Such prayers, God made it clear, He refused to hear.

Full of blood. The recently discovered Dead Sea scroll 1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, p. 86) adds, “and your fingers, of guilt,” thus making a couplet whose first member is, “your hands are full of blood.”

16. Wash you. Sin results in moral pollution and spiritual decay. When David sinned, his prayer was, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps. 51:7). He recognized the defilement of sin and asked God to give him a clean heart (v. 10), and his prayer was heard. Every sinner is in need of moral purification; his heart must be cleansed of its moral corruption. God calls upon the sinner to wash his heart of wickedness (Jer. 4:14), to cleanse his hands of iniquity (James 4:8). He promises to write His law in the heart (Jer. 31:33) and to cleanse man from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Isaiah called for Jerusalem to put on her beautiful garments, for the time was coming when the unclean would no longer enter there (Isa. 52:1). John declared that nothing that defiles will in any wise enter into the Holy City (Rev. 21:27). The lesson Isaiah endeavored to impress upon Israel was that God, “the Holy One of Israel,” requires holiness of His people.

Cease to do evil. God called upon His people to cease from sin. He was holy, and they were to be holy. Evil must be put out of the life of every child of God. Sin will not exist in the pure atmosphere of heaven, and all who enter there will wear the garments of righteousness.

17. Learn to do well. Those who serve God will “hate the evil, and love the good” (Amos 5:15). Negative “goodness”—refraining from evil acts—is not sufficient for any Christian. Godliness is an active principle, and the cultivation of righteousness is the surest guarantee against iniquity. Whatever his previous inclination may have been, a man will purpose not only to cease doing evil, but to put forth sincere efforts to do his best. In attaining this objective he will need both firmness of purpose and assistance from Heaven. Men are not born into the Christian life with perfection of character, but must learn, slowly and painstakingly, to walk in the ways of God. By study and diligence, patience and perseverance, determination and practice, they can, in time, acquire habits of right living. Every man who now does well has gone through the slow and painstaking process of learning to do well, and no man has truly learned to do well until right ways have become habitual with him.

Judgment. That is, “justice.”

Relieve the oppressed. Preferably, “straighten out oppression,” or “right wrong.” Many in Israel were being oppressed by their fellows. It was the duty of those who loved God to correct this situation. Oppressors must be restrained and the oppressed given the needed relief.

Judge the fatherless. Those who love the right will champion the cause of the fatherless and see that justice is done them.

Plead for the widow. The poor and needy, the unfortunate and oppressed, were in desperate need of relief. The leaders among the professed people of God were taking advantage of these unfortunate classes and enriching themselves at their expense. This situation called for correction. True love and sympathy would manifest themselves in efforts to redress wrong and to establish justice for all. No religion is worth the name that does not grapple with the problems of this present life and bring men into harmony with the principles of the kingdom of heaven. A religion that consists of the observance of magnificent ceremonies but neglects the needs of orphans and widows is meaningless. For further comment, see on James 1:27.

18. Come now. God here invites men to meet with Him for a free and frank discussion of their problems. He is not an inconsiderate judge or an arbitrary tyrant, but a kindly father and friend. Man’s interests are His interests, and man’s good is His good. All His admonitions are given for the good of man. This He desires man to understand and believe. It is hardly possible to conceive of a more appealing exhibition of the wonderful love and goodness of God than is found in this gracious invitation to “reason” with the Lord of heaven and earth. God is reasonable, and desires men to realize that it is to their advantage to forsake sin and to walk in the ways of righteousness. Man’s reasoning powers were given him to use, and he can make no better use of them than to discover the benefits of obedience and the woes of transgression.

Though your sins. In this promise the worst of sinners may find comfort and hope. God here assures us that however guilty we may have been in the past, however deep dyed our sin may have been, it is possible to be restored to purity and holiness. This promise deals not only with the results of sin but with sin itself. It can be eradicated and completely put out of the life. With the help of God the sinner may secure complete mastery over his every besetment (see on 1 John 1:9).

19. If ye be willing and obedient. Isaiah here sets forth the fruitage of obedience. A life of joy and blessedness is the natural result of obedience to the laws of God, for God cannot bless those who do not do their best. The joys of heaven are not arbitrary gifts of God to those who follow Him, but the natural result of compliance with His requirements. God sets before man the ways of righteousness because they are right and because they bring blessing in their train.

Ye shall eat. This promise applies both to this world and to the world to come. The harvest of obedience is reaped not only in heaven but also on earth (see on Matt. 19:29). Before Israel entered the Promised Land Moses set forth the blessings that would be theirs if they walked in the ways of the Lord (Deut. 28:1–13). Isaiah points out that these blessings had not been realized because of Israel’s failure to obey the commands of the Lord, God now assures them that these blessings may still be theirs if they will repent and walk in the ways of righteousness.

20. If ye refuse. It is not an arbitrary decree of God that condemns the sinner. He only reaps what he himself has sown. As blessings accompany right living, so woe does

wickedness. When men transgress the commandments of God the inevitable result is death. This is simply the outworking of the natural law of cause and effect. When Israel turned from God they inevitably entered the pathway of ruin. Moses had made this truth clear before Israel entered the Promised Land (Deut. 28:15–68). When men rebel against God and refuse to obey His law they automatically invite destruction. Every man has his fate entirely in his own hands; it rests with him alone to determine whether his future will be one of happiness or of misery. The great truth Isaiah set before the people of God was that sin ultimately brings its own destruction. Iniquity can never become the basis for eternal joy and blessedness. In a very real sense sinners are self-destroyed.

The Lord hath spoken it. God has foretold the inevitable results of sin, but this is far from being an arbitrary decree. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Eze. 18:23, 31, 32; Eze. 33:11), but knowing the inevitable result of sin, He has warned man exactly what the results of disobedience will be (see Hosea 13:9; 14:1; Rom. 6:21, 23; James 1:15; 2 Peter 3:9).

21. Become an harlot. Zion, once the faithful city, has become faithless. Once the true wife of Jehovah, she has now turned from Him and given herself to others. She has become a harlot. Hosea uses the same figure (ch. 2), as do also Jeremiah (ch. 2:20, 21) and Ezekiel (ch. 16). The experience of Israel shows the depths to which men may fall. Once pure and upright, chosen of God and loved by Him, Israel departed far from God and from the ways of righteousness. Once true and obedient, holy and upright, Israel became vile and corrupt, a startling example of the terrible fruitage of unfaithfulness to God.

Now murderers. Righteousness departed, and now corruption and depravity abode in its place. The city of saints had become a city of murderers and reprobates. Hosea (ch. 6:9) presents a similar picture: “As troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way.” Travelers on the highways and sojourners in the cities were exposed to outrage and murder, and this in a land where the people professed holiness and engaged in a great display of religion.

22. Thy silver. By two apt figures Isaiah contrasts the present with the past. The character of the people had degenerated from precious silver to worthless dross. The pure wine of righteousness and holiness had become diluted. Jesus employed a similar figure when He spoke of the salt that had lost its savor (Matt. 5:13).

23. Thy princes. Hosea (ch. 9:15) declares that “all their princes” were “revolters.” The chief men in Israel were stubborn and rebellious against the Lord, and the leaders in every form of crime (Isa. 3:12; 9:16; Micah 3:11).

Companions of thieves. The leaders in Israel, whose duty it was to enforce the law, were actually in secret partnership with those who violated its precepts. Brigands who infested the highways were unmolested by the officials, with whom they shared their gains.

Every one loveth gifts. Micah (ch. 7:3) declares that “the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward.” For every service the rulers in Israel expected a reward. Bribery was the order of the day.

They judge not. Judges turned a deaf ear to orphans and widows, who were usually not in a position to offer rewards like those given by their oppressors. It was easy for a judge to postpone indefinitely the hearing of the cases of the poor (see Luke 18:2–5).

24. The mighty One of Israel. A similar title for God is used in chs. 49:26; 60:16. The judges in Promised Land were not interested in the poor, from whom they could expect little in the way of reward, but the cause of the poor had come before Him who is ruler of heaven and judge of all the earth. Little did these oppressors of the poor realize that they were arraying against themselves all the might and power of Heaven. Through Isaiah the Lord gave the message, “I will contend with him that contendeth with thee” (ch. 49:25).

Mine adversaries. The enemies of just men are enemies of God. The Lord is against injustice and oppression of every kind. Those who take advantage of their fellows are setting themselves up as adversaries of God. Accordingly, the leaders of Israel were rapidly placing themselves in a position where God would be forced to take action against them.

Avenge me of mine enemies. God is not vindictive in meeting out judgement upon transgressors. His purpose is to save, not to destroy, but sin calls for judgment. Although God’s purpose is, if possible, to save the sinner from his sin, nevertheless those who persist in iniquity need to realize that the hour is coming when they must face the Judge of all the earth, who has pledged that He will not clear the guilty (Ex. 34:7; Num. 14:18).

25. Turn my hand upon thee. The Judge of all the earth is also the Saviour of men. The guilty in Israel will surely be judged, but the penitent will as surely be saved. With threats of judgement God always offers promises of deliverance. Jerusalem must be judged, but she will also be saved. Though the faithful city had become a harlot (v. 21), she may yet become a holy city, a “new” Jerusalem, “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2; cf. Isa. 62:4). The Lord would “turn” His “hand” upon His people to redeem and to restore them.

Dross. Waste product from smelting (see Isa. 1:22; cf. Mal. 3:2, 3). God would remove the accumulated dross of iniquity if Israel were only willing for Him to do so. The fires of affliction would remove the dross, and only the pure gold of holy character would remain (Job 23:10).

Tin. Literally, “dross.” All the base traits of character would be removed, and only the pure gold would remain.

26. Restore thy judges. The prophet looks forward to a time when there would again be faithful judges like Samuel, David, and Solomon. Israel would be an ideal state with ideal rulers.

The faithful city. There will be a Jerusalem marked by righteousness only when the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven after the thousand years (Rev. 21:1, 2). Then the city will be ruled by Jesus, the Son of David, who will “execute judgment and righteousness,” and the ideal city, no less than its righteous King, will be called “the Lord our righteousness,” (Jer. 33:15, 16; cf. Eze. 48:35).

27. Redeemed with judgment. Rather, “redeemed with justice.” It is a just Judge who will redeem and restore Zion by just judgment. In accord with His righteous decrees the dross of the sinful city will be thoroughly purged.

Her converts. Literally, “her returning ones.” The “converts” in Zion are those who recognize their sins and repent. Only they will be saved, and only they will be righteous. Zion will be a holy city, ruled by a holy God and inhabited by a holy people (see ch. 4:2–4). The righteousness of Christ will be both the means and the goal of salvation. As Jesus is righteous, so all inhabitants of the Holy City will be righteous, for they will be like

Him (1 John 3:2). The righteousness of Jesus is both imputed and imparted to all His followers. Salvation includes both the righteousness He imputes to them to atone for sins already committed and the righteousness He imparts to them to enable them to live above sin. Thus man will be fully restored to the image of God, in which he was originally created (Gen. 1:27).

28. Destruction. Those who rebel against God and engage in sin will perish. Rebellion against Heaven is a challenge to Jehovah to a trial of strength, and the result is inevitable. The threatened doom is total and certain.

Shall be consumed. God alone is the source of life. There can be no existence apart from Him. Having forsaken God, the wicked will face only one fate, and that is cessation of life. Not eternal life, but eternal death, will be the lot of all who forsake the Lord. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23), and “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Eze. 18:4), “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (2 Thess. 1:9). “The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away” (Ps. 37:20). “All that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch” (Mal. 4:1). “They shall be as though they had not been” (Obadiah 16). “For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be” (Ps. 37:10).

29. The oaks. Heb. *’elim*, trees of some kind, perhaps terebinth.

The gardens. Compare chs. 65:3; 66:17. These gardens were probably cultivated areas around the central tree or grove.

30. An oak. Like the objects of nature that they worshiped, the people also would perish.

That hath no water. Without water no garden can prosper. With the Lord is the fountain of life (Ps. 36:9), and those who forsake Him forsake the fountain of living waters (Jer. 2:13). As a garden without water becomes an arid waste, so, without God, Israel would degenerate into a desolate field. By forsaking the Lord, the Source of life, Israel sealed its own doom.

31. As tow. Tow, the coarse and broken part of flax, hemp, or jute when ready for spinning, is highly inflammable. Men who consider themselves strong will be consumed in the unquenchable fire that devours the wicked.

The maker of it. Rather, “and his work.” Both the wicked and their works will perish in the consuming fire of the last days (Peter. 3:7, 10).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 PK 314

5, 6 DA 266; MH 70; SC 43

6 PK 315

9 PK 324

10–12 DA 590; PK 323

11–13 Te 232

11–15 MH 341

12 5T 626

15 MH 342

15–20 2T 36

16, 17 DA 590; MH 224, 227; MYP 124; PK 315; SC 44; TM 146; 2T 289, 565; 5T 630;
 6T 149
 16–19FE 221
 17 CS 128; Ed 141; ML 242; MYP 348
 18 Ed 231; FE 239; MB 8; MH 123; PK 315; SC 43, 49; Te 287; 4T 294
 18, 19 6T 200
 18–205T 630; 6T 149
 19 ML 164; 2T 166, 234
 21 8T 250
 21–23FE 222
 25 CS 165; DA 107; PK 188; 1T 83; 3T 67; 5T 81; 7T 214
 25–277T 152
 28 Te 33

CHAPTER 2

1 *Isaiah prophesieth the coming of Christ's kingdom. 6 Wickedness is the cause of God's forsaking. 10 He exhorteth to fear, because of the powerful effects of God's majesty.*

1. Concerning Judah and Jerusalem. See on ch. 1:1.

2. It shall come to pass. Various interpretations have been given to the message of vs. 2–4: (1) that it refers to a millennium, when there will be peace on earth, when the Jews will be restored to their ancestral home and to their former status as God's chosen people, and rule the earth and accomplish the conversion of the world; (2) that it describes a counterfeit religious revival to take place at the close of earth's history, sponsored by apostate Christianity and designed to convert the world, such as is alluded to in 1 Thess. 5:1–5; Rev. 13:11–17; etc.; (3) that it describes God's original plan that literal Israel should become His agency for the salvation of the world, but that, owing to Israel's failure and rejection, the prediction here made will be fulfilled by God's chosen people today in the giving of the gospel message to earth's remotest bounds.

As with every other passage of Scripture, the only way to determine the true meaning of Isa. 2:2–4 and its significance for the church today is to study it in the context of the Scriptures as a whole, in terms of what the Bible itself has to say to on the subject. For a careful survey of the teachings of the Bible relative to the basic problems involved in various fanciful interpretations, to the return of the Jews to Palestine, and to the role of Israel in the divine plan, see pp. 25–38. For Ellen G. White comments on the parallel passage in Micah 4:1–3 as one of many “practical lessons” that contain “great encouragement” for the church today, see CT 455, 456.

It should be noted that Micah 4:1–3 is practically identical, word for word, with Isa. 2:2–4. A study of the context in Micah will be found helpful in clarifying the parallel passage in Isaiah. Isaiah and Micah were contemporary for a number of years.

The last days. Heb. *'acharith hayyamim*. *'Acharith*, “last,” generally designates the close of whatever period of time the speaker has in mind, whether the period be short or long. *'Acharith* is used of: (1) the close of the 430 years of sojourn (see on Gen. 15:13, 16) when Israel would possess Canaan (Gen. 49:1); (2) the close of the wilderness wanderings (Deut. 8:16); (3) the close of a future period of tribulation and exile (Deut. 4:30; Hosea 3:5); (4) the close of a period of history (Deut. 31:29); (5) the end result of a course of action (Prov. 14:12; 23:32; Isa. 47:7); (6) the “end” of the year (Deut. 11:12);

(7) the close of a period of trial and testing in a man's life (Job 42:12). In Bible prophecy it is used of: (1) the end of the power of God Greece (Dan. 8:23); (2) the close of the 1260 and 2300 days (Dan. 10:14; 8:19); (3) the in gathering of the Gentiles at the close of the age (Isa. 2:2; Micah 4:1); (4) the battle of Gog and Magog immediately prior to the establishment of the Messianic kingdom (Eze. 38:6, 7, 16); (5) the great day of final judgement (Jer. 23:30; 30:24); (6) the final "end" of the wicked (Ps. 37:38).

'*Acharith* is commonly translated in the LXX by *eschatos*, "last," "end." It is the opposite of *re'shith*, "beginning" (see on Gen. 1:1), as is apparent from Isa. 41:22; 46:10, where "former" and "beginning" stand in contrast with "latter end" and "end."

Biblical usage of '*acharith* makes it evident that the context must, in each case, determine how far in the future "last" is. The context of "the last days" in Isa. 2:2 refers to the manifestation of the "majesty" of God (v. 10), to "that day" in which "the Lord alone shall be exalted" (vs. 11, 17), to "the day of the Lord" (v. 12), to the time "when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (v. 19). Compare Isa. 2:10–21 with Rev. 6:14–17. The context of the parallel passage in Micah 4:1–4 mentions the time when "the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever" (v. 7), and refers to the time of restoration of the "first dominion" to Zion (v. 8) from Babylonian captivity (v. 10). Hence the "last days" of Isa. 2:2 immediately precede the establishment of the Messianic kingdom.

According to the principles of interpretation set forth on pp. 29, 30, the Messianic age, in God's original plan for Israel, was to have come as the climax to the period of restoration following Babylonian captivity (see PK 703, 704). But Israel failed to meet the conditions under which God could have fulfilled the many promises of national glory and universal dominion for Israel, and as a result the prediction of Isa. 2:14 was never fulfilled to literal Israel.

The mountain of the Lord's house. The LXX of Isa. 2:2 reads, "the mountain of the Lord and the house of God." "The Lord's house," or "house of the Lord," is the usual OT designation for the Temple (1 Kings 8:63; etc.), which was situated on Mt. Moriah (see on 2 Chron. 3:1; cf. Jer. 26:18; Micah 3:12). This, the "place" the Lord chose as a center for His worship (Deut. 12:5, 6, 14; 16:16), became the center and symbol of Judaism (1 Kings 8:29, 30; etc.). The Jewish religious system was so intimately bound up with the Temple and its service that the desolation of the latter in 586 B.C. and again in A.D. 70 rendered the system largely inoperative. When Jeremiah foretold the desolation of the Temple the religious leaders of the nation clamored for his death (see Jer. 26:1–9). The erroneous charge that Jesus had said He would destroy the Temple was the worst accusation the false witnesses could manufacture against Him (Mark 14:58; 15:29; cf. John 2:19). The inner courts of the Temple were the only places in Jerusalem from which Gentiles were excluded on pain of death (see Acts 21:28–31).

Thus, to say that "the mountain of the Lord's house" would be exalted to "the top of the mountains" was equivalent to saying that the God of Israel would be honored above other religions and gods. For the word "mountain" as a symbol of power, and thus of national power, see Isa. 2:14; Jer. 51:25; Eze. 6:2, 3; 36:1, 4; Zech. 4:7; Rev. 17:9, 10. Daniel refers to the kingdom of God becoming "a great mountain" that "filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35). For other illustrations of the Gentiles coming to the "holy mountain" of God, see also Isa. 11:1, 10; 56:6–8.

In the top of the mountains. Heb. *bero'sh heharim*, which may also be rendered “on the top of the mountains,” “on the chief of the mountains,” or “as the chief of the mountains.” In any case the meaning is the same. If “the mountain of the Lord’s house” is a figurative expression for the religion of Israel, then “the mountains” must be the other religions of earth. Being closely identified with Judaism as a religious faith, Israel as a nation would accordingly be “established” above other nations of earth (see pp. 27, 28; PP 314).

All nations shall flow unto it. According to God’s original plan for Israel as His chosen instrument for accomplishing the salvation of the world, the time was to come when the nations of earth would acknowledge the superiority and leadership of Israel as a nation (pp. 28–30). The glorious picture of the exaltation of Israel as a nation is repeated again and again throughout the writings of the OT prophets, especially in the prophetic messages of Isaiah (PK 367, 368). He speaks of the Gentiles running to Israel because of the Lord their God (ch. 55:5), of the nations coming from afar (chs. 45:14; 49:6–8, 12, 18, 22) to join themselves to Israel (ch. 14:1) and to the Lord (ch. 56:6), of God personally conducting them to His “holy mountain,” which would as a result become “an house of prayer for all people” (ch. 56:7, 8), and of the Gentiles bringing their wealth to Jerusalem (ch. 60:3–11). Jeremiah speaks of all the Gentile nations coming “from the ends of the earth” (Jer. 16:19) and being gathered “to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem” (Jer. 3:17). Zechariah foresaw the time when “many nations” would be “joined to the Lord” and be His people (Zech. 2:11), and “many people and strong nations” would come “to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem” (Zech. 8:21, 22; cf. Zech. 14:16). Thus, eventually, the kingdom of Israel would embrace the entire earth (COL 290; Zech. 9:9, 10). Nations that refused to cooperate with God’s plan and to unite with Israel were to “perish” (Isa. 60:12; cf. 54:3) and to be “dispossessed” (COL 290). This glorious picture of the eventual triumph of truth was never fulfilled to literal Israel, but will be to spiritual Israel. Isa. 2:1–5 thus becomes a picture of the glorious triumph of the gospel through God’s chosen instrument in our own day, His church (see on Rev. 18:1; see also pp. 35, 36).

3. Many people shall go and say. Here, as in the statement of v. 2 about “all nations” flowing to Jerusalem, the OT prophets repeatedly—sometimes in identical words—present what “many people shall go and say.” In recognition of the obvious superiority of Israel as a nation (Deut. 4:6, 7; 28:10; Isa. 61:9, 10; Isa. 62:1, 2; Jer. 33:9; Mal. 3:12) and admitting that their “fathers have inherited lies” (Jer. 16:19), the Gentile nations would say to one another, “Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord” (Zech. 8:21, 22), and to Israel, “We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:23). This promise of the ingathering of the nations to worship the true God was never fulfilled to literal Israel, owing to their failure to meet the requisite conditions, but will be fulfilled, spiritually, to God’s people in this generation (see pp. 32, 35).

Come ye, and let us go. Had Israel been faithful to God, these words would have been on the lips of the Gentiles, as men of other nations realized the desirability of honoring the true God. Compare the words of Zech. 8:21, 23, “Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord. ... We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”

The mountain of the Lord. The same as “the mountain of the Lord’s house” of v. 2. This proposal is another way of saying, “Let us go to Jerusalem.” The Dead Sea scroll

1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, pp. 86–88) omits the phrase “to the mountain of the Lord.”

The house. That is, the Temple in Jerusalem (see on v. 2).

The God of Jacob. Equivalent to “the God of Israel.” Israel was the covenant name of Jacob (see on Gen. 32:28). The fact that the Gentiles do not merely say, “Let us go up to Jerusalem,” but rather, “Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob,” indicates a true understanding of the fact that the greatness of Israel is due to the cooperation of the people with the divine plan and that they worship the true God.

He will teach us of his ways. In ch. 55:5 Isaiah speaks of the nations hastening to Jerusalem “because of the Lord thy God.” As they joined “themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord” (ch. 56:6–8), the Temple would literally become “an house of prayer for all people.” See pp. 28–30.

We will walk in his paths. From all nations men would come to unite their interests with those of Israel, saying, “We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:23). Eventually, “he that remaineth” of all the peoples of earth, “even he, shall be for our God” (ch. 9:7) and all nations “shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts” (ch. 14:16). This state of affairs was to have come true after “all the nations which came against Jerusalem” (v. 16) had suffered divine retribution (vs. 12, 13, 19) and the Lord reigned as “king over all the earth” (v. 9). Compare Eze. 38:8, 16, 18, 20–23; 39:1–3; Zech. 12:2, 3, 8, 9; 14:1–3.

Out of Zion. Jerusalem was to stand “forth in the pride of prosperity, the queen of kingdoms” and to be “established as the mighty metropolis of the earth” (DA 577). Both the Temple (PK 46) and the city “would have stood forever” (GC 19). The nations of earth would have honored the Jews, and recognized them as the trustees and expositors of the divine law to all men (Deut. 4:7, 8; Rom. 3:1, 2). The principles revealed through Israel were to have become “the means of restoring the moral image of God in man” (COL 286). And, “as the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world” (COL 290).

4. He shall judge. Not all of the peoples of earth would be willing to obey “the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (v. 3). Those who refused to submit to the authority of God, exercised through the Jews as His chosen people, would band together to secure by force of arms that which they were unwilling to gain by bringing their characters into harmony with the law of God (Jer. 25:32; Eze. 38:8–12; Joel 3:1, 12; Zech. 12:2–9; 14:2). Upon reaching Jerusalem and laying siege to it, they would discover to their dismay that they had entered into conflict with the God of heaven (Jer. 25:31–33) and that He would judge (Joel 3:9–17) and destroy them there (Isa. 34:1–8; 60:12; 63:1–6; 66:15–18). When the heathen had assembled themselves in the vicinity of the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2, 12), located immediately to the east of Jerusalem, God would “sit to judge all the heathen round about” (Joel 3:12). The word *Yehoshaphat* (Jehoshaphat) means literally, “Jehovah will judge.”

Rebuke many people. “All the people of the earth” are “gathered together against” Jerusalem (Zech. 12:3), but God will “defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Zech. 12:8) and “destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem” (Zech. 12:9). The events here described were never fulfilled to literal Israel owing to the failure of the nation to comply with the mission committed to them. As pointed out by John the revelator, however (Rev. 20:7–15), this prophecy will have a degree of fulfillment when, at the close of the

millennium, Satan deceives “the nations ... of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle” (v. 8) and to compass “the camp of the saints about” (v. 9). The wicked “stand before God” and are “judged out of those things which were written in the books” (vs. 11, 12), “every man according to their works” (v. 13). The nations of earth will all “know” that the Lord is God (Eze. 38:23). Compare Zech. 12:4; Rev. 19:19–21.

Plowshares. Heb. *’ittim*, agricultural instruments of some type, probably “plowshares,” or “mattocks.” In Akkadian the word means “plough beams.” The contrast is clear—weapons of war are transformed into instruments of peace. When the foes of Israel have been vanquished, those who remain (see Zech. 14:16) will turn their weapons of war back into instruments of peace. This was God’s plan, which never came true for literal Israel.

Nation shall not. When the foes of Israel have been annihilated the nations that remain all voluntarily submit to Israel’s leadership. From the walls of Jerusalem “the dove of peace” goes “forth to all nations” (DA 577). Jerusalem is “safely inhabited” (Zech. 14:11). “No strangers pass through her any more” (Joel 3:17, 18). The city is true to its name, a “possession of peace,” or “foundation of peace.” Again, God’s original plan for Israel failed of fulfillment because of apostasy.

Learn war any more. Compare Hosea 2:18; Ps. 46:9. Those who believe that a literal return of the Jews to Palestine presages their restoration to the covenant status of OT times have interpreted Isa. 2:1–4 and its parallel passage in Micah (ch. 4:1–3) as a prediction of millennial peace, with the Jews ruling the earth and converting it to God. Such an interpretation is, of course, without any scriptural basis (see pp. 25, 37). In an attempt to disprove this unscriptural teaching some have proposed to explain these verses of Isaiah as referring to a counterfeit religious revival. This suggestion should be examined by comparing the passage in Isaiah with similar passages throughout the OT. As set forth in pp. 25–38, the Scriptures consistently apply the picture here presented to the situation that would have prevailed had Israel been faithful to God, that is, to the ingathering of the Gentiles. But literal Israel’s unfaithfulness made the realization of this objective impossible. Accordingly, fulfillment would be to spiritual Israel in the final proclamation of the gospel to the nations of earth (Rev. 14:9–11; 18:1–4; see pp. 35, 36).

In CT 454, 455, a portion of the parallel passage in Micah 4:1–3 is quoted, together with Isa. 54:11–14 and Jer. 31:33, 34, as one of many “practical lessons in the word of God, lessons that Christ would have teachers and parents present to the children in the school and in the home,” and as one of the passages of Scripture that “contain great encouragement” and “are a treasure house of precious pearls” (CT 456). If Isa. 2:1–4 and Micah 4:1–3 constitute a practical lesson of “great encouragement” for God’s people today, they would hardly seem to be descriptive of a counterfeit religious revival. However, it is when the words of Isaiah and Micah are considered in the setting and context of comparable OT passages that their import comes into sharp focus. Note the following:

1. Isaiah specifically states that the message of vs. 2–5 concerns “Judah and Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:1; cf. Micah 4:2), God’s chosen people. Throughout the OT “Judah and Jerusalem” are always God’s people, imperfect and defective though they be, and God recognizes them as such (see Num. 23:21). Those whom God does not recognize as His people are never spoken of as “Judah and Jerusalem.” He never addresses Babylon or Egypt or Edom as “Judah and Jerusalem.” Notice also the appeal to the “house of Jacob”

in v. 5. The glorious prospect of the results of faithfulness to God should have proved a strong incentive to Israel to “walk in the light of the Lord” (see CT 455, 456).

2. Emphasis is sometimes placed upon the words “many people shall go and say” (v. 3) as evidence that what they say is in opposition to what the Lord has said. It should be noted, however, that what the “people” are here reported as saying is fully in harmony with the will of God as revealed elsewhere in His Word, and would be most appropriate on the lips of those who sincerely love the Lord. Furthermore, the very same thoughts, often in identical words, are placed on the lips of Gentile converts to Judaism throughout the OT. Compare, for instance, Zech. 8:21–23: “Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts. . . . Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” Here, the “people” of the “nations” say the very same thing as in Isa. 2:3, and God confirms their saying as representative of the ingathering of the nations to Israel. It would be difficult to construe the words of Isa. 2:2–4 to represent a false revival and those of Zech. 8:21–23 to represent a true revival. See also Deut. 4:6, 7; Isa. 45:14; 49:6, 12, 18, 22; 55:5; 56:6–8; 61:3–11; Jer. 3:17; 16:19; Zech. 2:11; 14:16; Mal. 3:12.
3. The words of Isa. 2:2 are the word of the Lord, not the word of “many people” (v. 3). It is God Himself who affirms in v. 2 the truth that “all nations” will “flow” to “the mountain of the Lord’s house.” To represent as a false religious revival what God calls for, is to deny that God knew whereof He was speaking. In v. 2 God says that “all nations” will “flow” to “the mountain of the Lord’s house,” and in v. 3 “many people” say, “Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.” They are obviously in harmony with God rather than opposed to Him.
4. If the words the people speak in v. 3 represent a false religious revival, it would seem that similar expressions throughout the OT should be similarly understood.
5. To equate the words of Isa. 2:3 with the “peace and safety” cry of 1 Thess. 5:3 is to overlook the import of such OT passages as Ps. 46:9; Hosea 2:18. The added promise of Micah 4:4, spoken by the mouth of the Lord, together with the context (vs. 5–8), makes clear that these words refer to the eternal peace of the Messianic kingdom (see Isa. 32:15–18).

That there will be a great counterfeit religious revival in the last days is clearly set forth by Inspiration. But that Isaiah is not here speaking of such a revival seems to be indicated by the following evidence regarding that false revival.

Christ predicted that the message of the ministers of the false religious revival would be of such a nature that “if it were possible, they” would “deceive the very elect” (Matt. 24:23–27). “So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true,” we are told, “that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures” (GC 593). When that time comes, only a genuine love for the truth and the most diligent heed to directions given through the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy will protect us against the delusions of the enemy, the seducing spirits, and the doctrines of devils (Hosea 4:6; 2 Thess. 2:9–12, 6T 401; 8T 298; TM 475).

Except for those who know and love the truth, the whole world will be led astray by these delusions (see Rev. 13:13–15; GC 562). As the nominal Christian churches unite,

popular religious leaders will see in this union a grand movement to evangelize the world; in fact, they specifically teach that all the world will be converted (GC 588, 589; EW 261; cf. 282). This counterfeit revival immediately precedes the proclamation of God's last great message of mercy and warning, set forth in Rev. 18:1–4, and is an endeavor to prevent men from accepting that message (GC 464). This is the “peace and safety” cry, by means of which Satan would lull men into a false sense of security, one from which they will not awake until it is too late (1 Thess. 5:1–5; cf. Jer. 6:14; 8:11; EW 282; PP 104; GC 562; COL 411; 5T 715). In this great false religious movement all who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof will unite (2 Tim. 3:1, 5).

Inasmuch as the counterfeit revival will closely resemble the true, Bible descriptions of the true will naturally, in a measure, be descriptive also of the false. Thus in such passages of Scripture as Rev. 14:6–11; 18:1–4; and others, which Inspiration clearly points out as descriptive of the true revival of godliness that will constitute the closing work of the gospel, it is possible, no doubt, to find points that Satan will endeavor to counterfeit. It is fitting and proper that we should study all that Inspiration has revealed concerning these things in an earnest endeavor to be prepared for the great crisis that lies ahead of the church.

In meeting the false claims and defective exegesis of Zionism and other movements that confuse and misapply OT prophecy by placing a fanciful interpretation upon it, “we should never allow ourselves to employ arguments that are not wholly sound. . . . We should present sound arguments, that will not only silence our opponents, but will bear the closest and most searching scrutiny” (5T 708). Concerning the counterfeit religious revival, Inspiration has provided a wealth of information, and in dealing with that important subject we can rely on the various passages of Scripture that clearly foretell such a movement. In this, as in all our study and exposition of Scripture, particularly of the messages of the OT prophets, we will do well to adhere closely to the principles set forth on pp. 25–38.

5. *House of Jacob.* At the time the prophet Isaiah bore this message the northern kingdom, the ten tribes, had not yet gone into captivity. Although Isaiah's messages were addressed primarily to the people of Judah and Jerusalem (see on ch. 1:1), his appeal to “walk in the light of the Lord” is here extended to all twelve tribes. Though the apostasy of the northern kingdom was all but complete, divine mercy still appealed to Israel to turn to God ere the day of salvation should pass.

Let us walk. The glorious prospect in store for Israel, envisioned in vs. 1–4, inspired the prophet to a stirring appeal to “walk in the light of the Lord.” He who has caught a vision of what God has in store for those who love and serve Him can no longer be content with ordinary achievements.

Obedience to known duty is the only valid evidence of the sincerity of a professed acceptance of God's offer of mercy. Indeed, a profession of faith unaccompanied by the works of obedience is declared “dead” (James 2:26). Those who hear the word of the Lord but neglect to do it are said to be like a man who builds his house upon shifting sand (Matt. 7:26, 27).

Light of the Lord. That is, the light of truth that the Lord has graciously sent by His servants the prophets. In Isaiah's day this was the light of salvation in the promised Messiah, who, when He came, declared Himself to be “the light of the world” (see on John 8:12). He was “the true Light,” “the light of men” (John 1:9, 4). Compare our

Lord's earnest appeal to the leaders of Israel in His day to walk in the light while the light was still in their midst (John 12:35, 36; cf. John 1:9–12).

6. *Forsaken thy people.* Instead of being in a condition to realize the glorious destiny God has in store for them, they have practically apostatized. They are no longer true, faithful, and obedient to the Lord, but cast off and forsaken, because of their gross iniquities. God is neither with them nor for them, but against them, because they have turned against Him. This was the stark reality of the situation, a startling contrast to the glorious prospect of which Isaiah had just spoken. Verses 6–9 describe the actual condition of Israel at present, whereas vs. 10–22 picture the inevitable result—their experience during the “day of the Lord” (v. 12). In view of Israel's apostasy, that day would bring darkness and terror to “the house of Jacob,” the professed people of God, as well as to the rest of the world.

Replenished from the east. To the east of Palestine was Babylonia, noted for its astrologers, soothsayers, and sorcerers (Dan. 2:2, 27; 4:7; 5:7, 11). It was because Israel had abandoned the Lord and turned to the false religious of the East that they forfeited His favor.

Like the Philistines. The inhabitants of Palestine were driven out before Israel because of their many abominations, having “hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners” (Deut. 18:10–14). Like the Babylonians, the Philistines had their occult priests and diviners (1 Sam. 6:2), and now the professed people of God were following their example. Instead of going to God for light, they went to leaders who were in league with the prince of darkness.

They please themselves. The Hebrew here is uncertain. Some have suggested the reading, “they strike hands with.” Either way the meaning is the same—Israel had entered into agreements with foreigners, “striking hands” with them in the sense of entering into agreements with them and engaging in a common cause. Israel was no longer a separate and peculiar people; they were one with the world about them in politics, trade, religion, and wickedness. Compare 2 Cor. 6:14.

7. *Silver and gold.* Judah had become a commercial people, and their great interest in life was material gain. They were rich in gold and silver, but poor in righteousness and faith. Uzziah's reign had been long and prosperous. He had been successful against the Philistines and Arabians, and had received tribute from the Ammonites (2 Chron. 26:7, 8). With prosperity came luxury and moral decline. Some idea of the extent of Judah's wealth in the days of Isaiah may be gained from the tribute Sennacherib claims to have received from Hezekiah, which included 30 talents of gold (more than 21/4 tons, or more than 2 metric tons; see Vol. I, p. 164), 800 talents of silver (more than 30 tons, or more than 27 metric tons), precious stones, and many other kinds of treasure.

Horses. Through Moses the Lord had instructed Israel not to “multiply horses” to themselves (Deut. 17:16), and through Samuel He had pointed out that the appointment of a king would result in provision for both horses and chariots (1 Sam. 8:11, 12). Solomon had many horses and chariots (1 Kings 10:25–29), and Uzziah undoubtedly followed his example in this regard. In OT times horses were used primarily in warfare. The multiplication of horses and chariots would turn the eyes of the people away from trust in God to trust in material things. Micah 5:10, 12, 13 declares that the Lord will in vengeance cut off the horses and chariots, together with the idols, witchcrafts, and soothsayers.

8. Full of idols. The reign of Ahaz was characterized by a great moral decline in which king and people forsook the true God and turned to the worship of idols. Images were made to Baal (see Vol. I, p. 173), human sacrifices were offered to heathen gods, altars were erected throughout Jerusalem, high places for the burning of incense to idols were dedicated throughout the land, and a heathen altar was erected in the Temple court, where Solomon's brazen altar had stood (2 Chron. 28:2–4, 23–25; 2 Kings 16:10–14).

9. The mean man boweth down. The words “mean” and “great” have been supplied by the translators to express the implied distinction of the Heb. *'adam*, “man,” as a human being, and *'ish*, “man,” as distinguished from woman. It was considered more honorable to be a “man,” *'ish*, than merely a human being, *'adam*, as the Hebrew of Ps. 49:2 makes clear. The meaning here is that men will be humbled and brought low before the Lord. They do not humble themselves—they are proud and lofty now—but will be humbled at the coming of the Lord (see Isa. 2:10–12).

Forgive them not. When “the day of the Lord” (v. 12) comes, sinners will have passed the time of their probation and will be beyond repentance (see Hosea 13:14; cf. Heb. 9:28). God cannot forgive them because they do not desire forgiveness.

10. Enter into the rock. In Palestine there were many caves and caverns, which provided natural places of shelter in times of danger (see Judges 6:2; 15:8; 1 Sam. 13:6; 24:3; 1 Kings 18:4). In the great day of the Lord, people will flee in terror to any available place of refuge, seeking shelter from the calamities that will fall upon the earth (see Rev. 6:15). Dead Sea scroll 1QIs lacks the last clause of Isa. 2:9 and all of v. 10.

11. The lofty looks. Men have set themselves up in defiance against the God of heaven. They have exalted their own opinions above the decrees of God. In the great reckoning day these proud and haughty men of earth will be brought low before the Lord of heaven (see ch. 13:11).

The Lord alone. Compare Ps. 46:10. When God comes in power and glory all flesh will be as grass before Him. The Lord then will be recognized in all His greatness and majesty for what He really is, the Creator and Sustainer not only of this earth but of the universe. He sits exalted upon the throne of His glory, Judge of all the peoples of earth and Ruler of the universe.

That day. “That day” is “the day of the Lord” (v. 12), when Jesus returns to reign, redeeming His people and destroying the wicked (chs. 13:9; 34:8).

12. The day of the Lord. “The day of the Lord” is the day of God's wrath upon individual nations and upon the world. When a nation goes so far in iniquity that its doom is sealed and final judgment is pronounced against it by the Lord, this is “the day of the Lord” for that particular people. These localized, individual days of the Lord upon Israel (Amos 5:18), Judah and Jerusalem (Lam. 2:22; Eze. 13:5; Zeph. 1:7, 14, 18; 2:2, 3; Zech. 14:1), Babylon (Isa. 13:6, 9), Egypt (Jer. 46:10; Eze. 30:3), and Edom and the heathen in general (Obadiah 15) were types of the greater day of the Lord's judgment yet to come upon the entire world (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). See also Isa. 34:8; Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14; Zech. 14:1; Mal. 4:5. Prophecies of a local “day of the Lord” are often descriptive also of the universal “day of the Lord” at the end of the world. Similarly, Jesus blended predictions of the fall of Jerusalem with those of His second coming.

Proud and lofty. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). Pride turned men against God and led them to oppress their fellow men.

Pride leads men to array themselves against God, forcing Him to become their enemy. Consequently, the might of heaven is arrayed against them. It is only a question of time till they perish, together with all their works. Isaiah saw the professed people of God vaunting themselves and glorying in their own achievements; he also saw them humbled in the dust before the Creator in the great day of the Lord.

13. *The cedars of Lebanon.* In their pride and glory, nations and individuals are often compared to stately trees (Isa. 14:8; Eze. 31:3–14; Dan. 4:10–23; Zech. 11:1, 2) that may be cut down and despoiled of their glory.

14. *The high mountains.* Mountains in Scripture are often figurative of kingdoms. As the wrath of God will be upon the proud and lofty among men in the great day of His anger, so it will also be upon proud nations. Nations that have vaunted themselves and lifted themselves up against the Lord of hosts will be brought low and made desolate.

15. *Every high tower.* These are the defenses of human devising, in contrast with the defense God provides for His own. Uzziah had greatly strengthened the defenses of Judah, building strong towers in Jerusalem, adding to the walls of the capital, and building towers in rural areas. These measures were continued by his successors (2 Chron. 26:9, 10; 27:3, 4; 32:2–6; Isa. 22:8–11; Hosea 8:14). None of these defenses would stand in the day of the wrath of God.

16. *The ships of Tarshish.* These were great seagoing ships, carrying cargoes of metals in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea for commerce with distant lands (see 1 Kings 10:22; 22:48; 2 Chron. 20:36). The judgment of Heaven would rest upon these commercial enterprises, prompted as they were by selfishness and greed.

All pleasant pictures. The Hebrew of this phrase was formerly considered uncertain. Recent studies, however, reveal that the Heb. *śekiyyah*, formerly thought to mean “picture,” means “ship.” The phrase should therefore be translated “all pleasant ships,” or “all desirable ships.” The context—the first part of this verse—confirms this definition. The LXX also reads “ships.” In Egyptian *skti* means “ship.”

17. *The loftiness of man.* See v. 11. The message of condemnation of the proud and haughty is here reiterated by way of emphasis. Humiliation and shame will be the ultimate fate of those who think and act contrary to the purposes of the Lord of heaven.

19. *The holes of the rocks.* See on v. 10. Again the picture is one of seeking shelter in the numerous natural caves and rocky crevices of Palestine, which often provided an effective means of escape and defense in times of danger. Compare Hosea 10:8; Rev. 6:15, 16.

Shake terribly. Heb. *‘aras*, “to suffer a shock,” “to tremble.” A great earthquake is to accompany the return of Christ. Compare Isa. 2:21; Rev. 11:19; 16:18. This will bring desolation to all the earth, engulfing large cities, removing islands out of their places and tearing mountains from their foundations. It is the voice of God that causes this shaking in the earth (see GC 637).

20. *Idols of silver.* Men who have fled into the caves from the presence of God cast away their idols, which they now recognize cannot help them. These are not necessarily literal idols, but may be treasures of gold and silver they have heaped together for themselves. These now prove utterly useless and unable to provide relief, and are cast away as worthless.

Moles. Creatures that live underground, or in caves, ruins, and disused buildings. It is to such places as these that the people have fled for refuge (vs. 10, 19, 21).

21. The clefts of the rocks. Isaiah repeats the picture of v. 19, with certain additions and variations. This is the climax of the view presented to Isaiah concerning the terrible scenes yet to come upon the earth. The hour is near when this prophecy is to be fulfilled (see 7T 141) and the Lord will reveal Himself to shake terribly the earth and to deal in justice with those who have knowingly rejected His mercy and violated His law.

22. Cease ye from man. If such is to be the fate of evil men, why trust longer in them? God's people were trusting in their own cleverness and in the assistance of their heathen neighbors. They ought to turn to God and find in Him in their help and strength.

The import of the words, "Cease ye from man," is similar to that of Christ's admonition to His disciples as recorded in Matt. 10:17, "Beware of men." Again and again God warned Israel not to place their trust in human strength, either their own or that of such neighboring nations as Egypt and Assyria, but rather to have confidence in what He could and would do for them, if faithful to Him. As at the Red Sea, at Jericho, and before the gates of Jerusalem in the days of Sennacherib, God proved the sufficiency of divine power.

Whose breath. These words emphasize the frailty of the life of man (see Gen. 2:7; 7:22; Ps. 146:3, 4). It was God who gave man breath and life, and when his breath leaves him, life ceases. Why depend upon frail, mortal beings for help when God promises to provide guidance and strength?

Wherein is he to be accounted of? Or, "of what value is he?" "of what account is he?" Who is man, and what can he do, that such great reliance should be placed upon him? Men vaunt themselves and set themselves up in defiance against the great God of heaven, rejecting His word and refusing to walk in His ways. These men will utterly perish, together with the things they have made, whereas God and truth will never perish. Why turn to men who have turned against God? Nothing in the vaunted civilization man has built and in which he takes such boundless pride is worth preserving. His high towers and walls, his ships of Tarshish, his treasures of gold and silver, will perish in the day when the Lord "arise to shake terribly the earth" (v. 19). The proud and the lofty will be brought low, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 5 FE 222; 3T 160, 190
- 8, 9 PK 306
- 10-12GC 638
- 11 PK 186
- 11, 12 PK 306
- 17 IT 140; 2T 281
- 17, 18 PK 727
- 19 GW 265; LS 412; MYP 89; 7T 141; 8T 36
- 20 Ev 63; IT 169; WM 266
- 20, 21 COL 372; CS 224; GC 638; PK 727; PP 341
- 21 EW 34; MYP 89; 8T 36
- 22 FE 222; TM 376, 476, 483; 5T 301

CHAPTER 3

1 *The great confusion which cometh by sin.* 9 *The impudency of the people.* 12 *The oppression and covetousness of the rulers.* 16 *The judgments which shall be for the pride of the women.*

1. From Jerusalem and from Judah. Jerusalem and Judah represent the professed people of God, who, in Isaiah's time, had gone far from God and yet made a loud but vain profession of religion. A similar situation prevails in the world today, and the same message is needed in these last days for a people who worship God with their lips but whose hearts are far from Him. See on Matt. 15:7–9.

The staff and the staff. The Lord is about to remove from Judah the two chief supports of life, bread and water. See Lev. 26:26; Ps. 105:16; Eze. 4:16; 5:16; 14:13, where the expression "staff of bread" is used. Undoubtedly Isaiah here refers to literal famine, but the context seems to apply the figures of literal famine to a dearth of able leaders. The nation would suffer from a lack of leadership as the body does from lack of food. When statesmen were removed, the responsibilities of government rested upon the shoulders of weaklings. The inevitable result was national decline (see vs. 2–5).

2. The judge, and the prophet. Verses 2 and 3 list the various classes of men who were the mainstay of the nation. Without such leaders no state can long endure. But men like these would be removed from Judah, with the result that national weakness and disruption would follow. The Lord does not say that He will deliberately remove such men from the land, but simply calls attention to the working of the law of cause and effect. He allowed Israel to have leaders after their own heart, who would rule as the people wanted to be ruled.

3. The honourable man. Or, "the man of rank" (RSV). This verse continues the list of able leaders to be removed from Judah—army officers, men occupying positions in the civil service, all needed to make a nation strong and prosperous. It was men of this type who were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (see 2 Kings 24:14; cf. Jer. 24:1; Dan. 1:3, 4).

4. I will give children. The leadership in national affairs would fall into the hands of men with the brains of children. Men lacking in ability would be chosen to govern the nation. There would be a grave lack of capable leaders, and as a result affairs would go from bad to worse. "Babes"—capricious individuals, men lacking clarity of thought and judiciousness of action—would make the decisions and control the destiny of the state. Under such conditions national doom would be swift and certain.

5. Shall be oppressed. Nations with wise and capable rulers do not suffer from injustice and oppression. A determined effort on the part of a nation's leaders to promote equality and justice will prevent abuses that result in the ruin of civilization. When citizens of a nation are constantly oppressed by their neighbors their confidence and prosperity languish. Where there is injustice and deceit, violence and oppression, a nation is on the downward path, and a day of reckoning is certain to come. This has been true in all the ages; it was true of Judah in the day of Isaiah, and it is fully as true today. Corruption paves the way for chaos and ruin.

The child shall behave. Those young in years and experience would disdain the counsel of their elders. As set forth in the Decalogue, man's first duty to his fellow men is to honor his parents (Ex. 20:12; cf. Lev. 19:32). The perils foretold of the last days include those of children "disobedient to parents," and men "heady, highminded," and "despisers of those that are good" (2 Tim. 3:1–4).

6. *Thou hast clothing.* Attempts would be made to thrust leadership upon men with property, ignoring the fact that the possession of material advantages is not necessarily evidence of ability to govern.

Let this ruin. By “this ruin” the speaker refers to the nation as if it were a dilapidated dwelling. Times would be far from prosperous.

7. *I will not be an healer.* This is the reply of the brother who had been urged to become ruler over the “ruin” (v. 6). The appeal is refused, and the position of “healer” goes unfilled. Not for him is the task of binding up other men’s wounds. If there is a work of restoration to be done, let another undertake the responsibility. Whether or not he possessed the qualifications, he would refuse the responsibility of leadership.

8. *For Jerusalem is ruined.* By the time of Sennacherib’s invasions (see Vol. II, pp. 87, 88) the kingdom of Judah had been largely reduced to ruins. King Hezekiah had been forced to submit to a burdensome levy imposed by the Assyrian king (see on ch. 2:7). Though Sennacherib did not succeed in entering Jerusalem, the rest of the nation had fallen into his hands.

Their tongue and their doings. Isaiah here sets forth the reason for the humiliation that had befallen the nation and the complete ruin that was certain to follow—the people had forsaken the Lord, and as a result He could no longer bless and protect them. In both word and deed the professed people of God were in rebellion against Him.

To provoke the eyes of his glory. Literally, “to rebel before the eyes of his glory,” that is, “in his very presence” (see v. 9). God is long-suffering and kind, and hesitates long before inflicting judgment upon the guilty. But the time of reckoning, though long delayed, will surely come.

9. *The shew of their countenance.* Literally, “their regard for faces,” meaning “their partiality” (see Acts 10:34). Right or wrong was without meaning for these evil men; they did as they pleased. Justice did not count, only expediency. Their attitude and their deeds bore witness against them in the sight of Heaven.

Their sin as Sodom. The men of Sodom were open sinners. The city was notorious for its wickedness, and the people took delight in their reputation for evil. There was no pretense of right action—nothing but blatant iniquity openly flaunted before the world. This class of sinners was in open rebellion against God, and made no attempt to hide the fact. At this stage, vice no longer paid homage to virtue by making a pretense of goodness. There was an open display of vice and iniquity, an utter shamelessness in the doing of wrong. The cities of Israel were like the cities of the plain in their profligacy, and were ripe for destruction.

Rewarded evil. Sin sows the seeds of its own destruction. A sinner’s wickedness calls for a cup of bitterness and evil that will burn his soul and destroy his being. All who do wrong reward themselves with evil, not good.

10. *Say ye to the righteous.* Every man reaps that which he himself has sown. The righteous sows good seed, which will bring forth a harvest of good. The great lesson men need to learn is that whatsoever they sow they will also reap. There is no greater mistake that parents or teachers can make than to allow the youth to think that when they sow evil they may reap good. Inexorable fate has pronounced a curse upon the sinner. Let no man therefore say to the sinner in Zion that the future will be well with him. It cannot be, for God has pronounced a curse. Only he who forsakes sin and does well may expect the blessing of Heaven.

11. Woe unto the wicked! This is not an arbitrary decree on the part of God, but the statement of a fundamental fact. Nothing in the world is more certain than that the sowing of evil produces evil. When men sow wickedness, they and the world about them are certain to reap a harvest of woe. By its iniquity Israel was destroying itself. It was necessary to impress this fact indelibly upon the hearts of all in order that there might be a turning away from sin, and the nation saved as a result. There is no greater patriot or more valuable citizen than the preacher of righteousness. From first to last, Isaiah kept this point before his people, and not altogether without success. It was largely his preaching that brought about a reformation, and thereby saved the nation from the doom that would otherwise have speedily engulfed the land.

Shall be given him. The recently discovered Dead Sea scroll 1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, p. 86) reads, “will return to him.”

12. Children are their oppressors. These words are sometimes thought to refer to the ages of the kings of Judah at this time, but that can hardly be true because the rulers during the time of Isaiah were not unusually young when they began to reign. Jotham was 25 when he came to the throne (2 Kings 15:33), Ahaz was 20 (2 Kings 16:2), and Hezekiah was 25 (2 Kings 18:2). Azariah (Uzziah), however, was only 16 when he came to the throne (2 Kings 15:2), but Isaiah’s ministry evidently did not begin till near the end of Azariah’s reign (see Isa. 6:1). Manasseh was 12 (2 Kings 21:1) and Josiah only 8 (2 Kings 22:1) when they began to rule. Since the kings of Isaiah’s time were not literally youths, it is not likely that such would be the case, literally, with their appointed officials. The meaning is that the rulers of the time were children in mental outlook and capacity. Experienced leadership was lacking, on the throne, in the home, and elsewhere. This was, of course, true particularly with Ahaz, who began to rule a few years after Isaiah received his call, and who was succeeded by the good king Hezekiah.

Women rule over them. Again the meaning is that the land was governed by men who were without any particular aptitude for rulership. Although the words “children” and “women” are not to be taken literally, the influence of the haughty and dissolute “daughters of Zion” described in vs. 16–24 must have exercised an indirect influence upon affairs of state through the leaders. Instead of helping their husbands, such women were a hindrance to them, and instead of teaching their children the ways of righteousness, they led them in paths of evil.

They which lead thee. A leader occupies a position of great responsibility, for where he leads, the people will follow. When leaders go in the wrong direction entire nations are led astray. The civil and religious leaders of Isaiah’s time were leading the professed people of God into paths of iniquity and destruction. The world today is under evil influences that are steadily but surely leading men along pathways of evil, whose end is eternal doom. Never in all the ages was right leadership of greater importance than it is today.

13. The Lord standeth up. When evil reaches a certain limit, which the Lord has predetermined, He will arise in judgment (PK 364; 5T 208, 524). Intercession ceases and the execution of judgment begins. God is pleading with His people to repent and turn from their evil before it is forever too late.

14. The ancients. That is, the elders and leaders who were ruling the land. They were “blind leaders of the blind” (Matt. 15:14). The people looked to them for guidance and wisdom, only to be led into ways of evil and folly.

Eaten up the vineyard. The vineyard represents the nation of Israel (ch. 5:7; see chs. 1:1, 8, 27; 2:1, 3; 3:1, 8, 16; 4:3, 4). The civil and religious leaders were the keepers of the vineyard. Instead of caring for it, they had devoured it. Their interest was in themselves rather than in the welfare of the people they governed.

The spoil of the poor. The poor of the land were defrauded by those who ruled over them. The reason for the impoverishment of the people was the greed of those in positions of influence and power.

15. Ye beat my people. The people of Israel were the people of God. The poor and unfortunate were as much children of God, and were held in as high esteem by the Ruler of heaven, as were the rich. God noted every injustice, and would hold every oppressor responsible for his misdeeds. By reason of their feebleness and poverty the weak and needy have a claim upon every person who professes to be a servant of God. To oppress the poor is to violate the basic principles of the kingdom of heaven. God will not look kindly upon those who secure wealth by taking advantage of the poor, and then endeavor to save their conscience by making offerings of ill-gotten gains to the Lord.

16. Daughters of Zion. Having discussed the princes and elders of Israel, Isaiah now turns to their wives and daughters, who are fully as degenerate. Nowhere else in the Bible is there so detailed a denunciation of degenerate womanhood as here. The women of Isaiah's time are pictured exactly as they were—vain, haughty, highminded, proud, interested in themselves rather than in the Lord and the needs of those about them. In striking contrast is the picture Peter gives of ideal Christian womanhood (Peter 3:1–5). Haughtiness was the outstanding characteristic of the “daughters of Zion,” whereas “a meek and quiet spirit” is the outstanding trait God would see reflected in their lives.

Walk. The women of Zion affected the gait of harlots in order to attract the attention of men. With outstretched necks and ogling eyes, with mincing steps and coy glances, the women walked the streets, seeking to attract attention to themselves and bring their victims within their power (see Prov. 7:6–21).

A tinkling. In certain Oriental countries small silver bells were fastened to the ankles, which gave out a tinkling sound as the wearers walked. Bracelets were worn on legs as well as arms, and these too made a tinkling sound as the girls walked the streets. The “daughters of Zion” followed the customs of the degenerate nations about them.

17. A scab. The women would be smitten with various types of disease and would fall victim to brutal invaders who would strip them of their costly clothing.

18. The bravery. Literally, “the beauty.”

Tinkling ornaments. Heb. *‘akasim*, literally, “anklets,” from the root *‘akas*, “to shake bangles,” “to tinkle.” *Akas* is translated “tinkling” in v. 16.

Cauls. Heb. *shebisim*, perhaps “hair nets,” or “headbands” of gold or silver worn over the head, from ear to ear.

Round tires like the moon. Heb. *śaharonim*, literally, “little moons,” probably crescent-shaped pendants worn as necklaces. In the ancient Orient many types of neck ornaments were in use, made of gold or silver, or of precious stones.

19. Chains. Heb. *netiphoth*, literally, “eardrops.” These were probably pendants hanging from the ears.

Bracelets. Bracelets were, and still are, a favorite ornament in Oriental lands. They were frequently large and gaudy, and several were often worn at a time.

Mufflers. Heb. *re'aloth*, "veils," that is, scarfs or long, flowing veils.

20. Bonnets. Heb. *pe'erim*, "headdresses" of various types—probably including diadems, ribbons, hats, and highly decorated hairpins. See also Ex. 39:28, where the word *pe'erim* is used of priestly "bonnets" (see Eze. 44:18).

Ornaments of the legs. Heb. *se'adoth*, "bracelets," probably worn on the legs, possibly also on the arms. Oriental women often decorated their legs as much as they did their arms.

Headbands. Heb. *qishshurim*, "bands," for the head or for the breast. This was a highly ornamental article of dress in Eastern lands, particularly as worn by brides. Compare Jer. 2:32, where *qishshurim* is rendered "attire."

Tablets. Literally, "breath containers," probably perfume boxes or scent bottles.

Earrings. Heb. *lehashim*, "charms," or "amulets," probably containing magic words and worn to produce for the wearer some magical effect.

21. Rings. Heb. *tabba'oth*, "rings" for the fingers or the ears, also "signet rings" (see Gen. 41:42; Ex. 35:22; Num. 31:50; Esther 8:8).

Nose jewels. Or, "nose rings," a very common item of jewelry in the East, today as in ancient times.

22. Changeable suits of apparel. More accurately, "formal dresses," "festal robes," "state dresses." Compare Zech. 3:4, "change of raiment." The garments referred to were used only on state occasions, and were removed before the wearer resumed the activities of ordinary life.

Mantles. Or, "tunics," or "overtunics."

Wimples. Heb. *mitpachoth*, a large "shawl" worn as a "cloak" over the tunic. See Ruth 3:15, where *mitpachoth* is employed for the veil worn by Ruth. The recently discovered Dead Sea scroll 1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, pp. 86–88) omits "and the wimples."

Crisping pins. Heb. *charitim*, probably "purses," or "handbags" (see 2 Kings 5:23).

23. Glasses. Heb. *gilyonim*, from the root *galah*, "to uncover," "to reveal." Whether *gilyonim* refers to "transparent garments," as some authorities following the LXX think, or "mirrors," as others suggest, with the Vulgate, is not certain. Transparent dresses were common in ancient Egypt, and may have been adopted by the women of apostate Judah. Polished metal mirrors were also common in the ancient Orient (see on Ex. 38:8). Since other items in the list refer to articles that were worn, the *gilyonim* were probably articles of dress or some objects worn as a part of the costume.

Fine linen. Garments of fine linen, at times comparable to the finest silk or the sheerest gauze, were highly prized in the ancient East.

The hoods. Or, "turbans," which completed the attire, and over which the veil was thrown.

24. Sweet smell. That is, "perfume," probably from balsam oil.

Stink. Or, “musty smell.” Many living in luxury would be stripped of earthly wealth and carried captive to foreign lands. The Assyrians were cruel masters. Sennacherib claims to have taken 200,150 of the people of Judah captive to Assyria in the year 701. Among the captives he particularly mentions daughters of the royal household, royal concubines, and male and female musicians. Many of the “daughters of Jerusalem” who flaunted their finery at the time of Isaiah’s scathing denunciation were no doubt among those stripped and taken to Assyria in disgrace and shame. Instead of the balmy scent of perfume there would be the stench of squalor, pestilence, and death.

Instead of a girdle a rent. Instead of an embroidered girdle there would be rags—a “rope” around the loins instead of a “sash.”

Well set hair. Heb. *miqsheh*, “artificially set hair.” Instead of beautiful, well-dressed hair there would be the cropped head of the slave.

Stomacher. Heb. *pethigil*, a “garment” of fine material and workmanship. Instead of such a garment there would be nothing but a scrap of sackcloth to wear as a cover over the loins.

Burning instead of beauty. This translation is based on the Masoretic Hebrew text (see Vol. I, pp. 34–36), which reads, *ki-tachath yophi*. Both the LXX and the Vulgate omit the phrase completely, though Lucian’s revision of the LXX has the interpretive rendering *tauta soi anti kallopismou*, “all of these [shall be] to you instead of adornment.” This makes the last phrase of v. 24 a summary statement of the entire verse rather than the final item in the list of woes. The KJV reading is based on the belief that the Heb. *ki* is from the verb *kawah*, “to burn,” “to scorch,” “to brand.” No other instance of *ki* thus used is known, and it is extremely doubtful that this can be its meaning here. Modern translators and commentators have followed the conjectural rendering of the KJV, suggesting that the women of Jerusalem were to be branded as slaves (see Moffatt’s translation) as cattle are branded, with a hot iron. The recent discovery of the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs, dating from about 125 B.C., and thus a thousand years older than the oldest Masoretic text of Isaiah (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, pp. 86–88), solves the problem with the reading *ki-tachath yophi bosheth*, “thus instead of beauty, shame,” *bosheth* meaning “shame” (see on 2 Sam. 2:8). The Heb. *ki* thus assumes its normal meaning as a conjunction—“thus,” “therefore,” “yea,” or “for”—in this instance introducing the summary phrase for Isa. 3:24. *Ki* is translated “for” in chs. 5:7; 51:3, for instance. Isa. 3:24 thus provides an interesting illustration of the value of the recently discovered Isaiah scroll in restoring the original reading of the Hebrew text.

25. The sword. In coming judgments the men of Judah would fall by the sword of invading armies. It is impossible to say how many thousands in Judah perished at the hands of the Assyrians during the days of Isaiah. If over 200,000 men and women were taken captive at the time of Sennacherib’s invasion of 701, it is possible that the number slain in this, his first campaign, was even greater (see on 2 Kings 18:13). It should be noted, however, that Sennacherib is often given to exaggeration.

Thy mighty in the war. Sennacherib mentions the elite troops of Hezekiah falling into his hands. Undoubtedly many of the bravest soldiers perished and many others were taken captive to the far land of Assyria.

26. Her gates. Jerusalem is pictured as a stricken woman, sitting on the ground desolate and afflicted, crying bitterly over the terrors that have overwhelmed her. The experience of Israel of old was recorded “for our learning” (Rom. 15:4), “for our admonition” (1 Cor. 10:11), with the purpose that we should avoid making the same mistakes (1 Cor. 10:1–10) and as a result realize the glorious purpose God has for His people today (see Heb. 3:7, 8, 12–15; 4:1–3, 11, 14, 15).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–261T 270
 1–4PK 323
 8 PK 324
 9 PP 455
 10 8T 250
 10, 11 Ed 146; GC 540; 1T 469; 2T 648; 3T 272; 5T 431
 12 FE 222; PK 324; 5T 88
 14–16, 18–23PK 306
 25 1T 270

CHAPTER 4

3

In the extremity of evils, Christ’s kingdom shall be a sanctuary.

1. In that day. That is, the day described in ch. 3:24–26. There is no break in the line of thought between chs. 3 and 4. The chapter division at this point tends to obscure the meaning of ch. 4, which must be considered a continuation of ch. 3. For similar instances of inaccurate chapter division, see on 1 Sam. 4:1; 24:1; 2 Kings 7:1; 11:21; 24:20. In ch. 4:1 Isaiah pictures the climax of divine chastisement upon the unregenerate daughters of Zion.

Seven women. “In that day”—the day of war (see on ch. 3:24–26)—the flower of Hebrew manhood would have fallen before the arms of Assyria or been led off into captivity. There would be a number of unmarried women for every marriageable man. The women would appeal to the few men who remained, to marry them. A number of these women, who had lived in luxury and ease, proudly fastidious in their perfumed splendor, would approach one man asking for such protection and comfort as marriage might afford. They would declare their willingness to work for their own food and clothing, normally the responsibility of the men in Israel (Ex. 21:10). In a country where polygamy was already common, such a situation would lead to an appreciable increase in plural marriages.

Some have applied the situation described in v. 1 directly to the church today, suggesting that the “seven women” represent nominal Christians, and the “one man,” Christ. These women, they explain, “take hold” of Christianity, not in sincerity (see Matt. 25:1–13), but superficially, hypocritically, and with a view to personal advantage only. The “seven women” propose to “eat” their “own bread” rather than the “true bread from heaven” (John 6:32), to “wear” their “own apparel”—the “filthy rags” of Isa. 64:6—rather than the perfect robe of Christ’s righteousness (Matt. 22:11–12). Thus applied, Isa.

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

4:1 is made to emphasize the value of sincerity in religious life, as opposed to self-righteousness and hypocrisy. Others have compared the “seven women” to religious groups of Christendom that have “a form of godliness” but deny “the power thereof” (2 Tim. 3:5).

Figurative applications of Isaiah’s words may have some spiritual value. It is always possible that a prophet’s declarations may have a secondary as well as a primary meaning. However, there is no inspired comment on this passage to guide the Bible student in making a secondary application. It is this fact that prompts the commentary writers to give only an immediate historical import to this passage. The message of Isa. 3:16 to 4:1 was originally addressed to the people of Jerusalem living in the prophet’s own day (see pp. 25–38), as the context makes evident.

Take away our reproach. In Hebrew this is an imperative. To be childless was considered by Hebrew women a shame and reproach, a chastisement for sin (Gen. 30:23; 1 Sam. 1:6; Luke 1:25). The women of Judah desired motherhood, and were appealing to the men that remained, to become their husbands.

2. In that day. See on v. 1. This again refers to the day of God’s judgment on Israel, but this verse introduces another and brighter aspect of the picture. While the day of the Lord will bring doom to the wicked, it will also bring salvation to the righteous (see Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6–10; Rev. 22:12). Verses 2–6 present a picture of Christ, “the branch” (see on Isa. 11:1), as Redeemer and Deliverer, and of the glorious work He will do for His people. Originally this prediction was to have been fulfilled to literal Israel, but owing to their failure as a nation it will be fulfilled, in principle, to spiritual Israel (see pp. 25–38), at the second coming of Christ.

The branch. Compare the Messianic prophecies of Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12, where Christ is referred to as “the Branch” (see PK 592). Israel would be desolate, as it were a withered tree (see Isa. 5:7), but a branch of righteousness would spring from the seed of David and bring forth fruits of righteousness. Literal Israel would perish as a nation, but Jesus would ultimately cause the earth to flourish with righteousness. This picture of a desolate earth at length bearing abundant fruit appears repeatedly throughout the Scriptures (see Ps. 72:16; Eze. 34:27; 47:6–9; Hosea 2:15, 21, 22; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13).

The fruit of the earth. The original Land of Promise was a fruitful land (Ex. 3:8; 33:3; Num. 13:27; Deut. 8:7–10). It would bring forth its fruits in abundance if God’s people would only be faithful to Him (Deut. 28:1–12). But if they should prove unfaithful, there would be drought, desolation, and death (Lev. 26:14–39; Deut. 28:15–48; Hosea 2:1–13). In the end God would be gracious to His people and they would be restored to His favor. Indeed, the entire earth would be restored and the fruit of righteousness would fill it (see Isa. 35; 44:3–6; 55:10–13; 60:21; 61; 62; Jer. 3:18, 19; Eze. 34:25–31; Hosea 1:10; Joel 2:19–27; Amos 9:13–15; cf. 2 Peter 3:13).

Escaped of Israel. That is, the remnant that survives. The recently discovered Dead Sea scroll 1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, pp. 86–88) adds, “and of Judah.” Isaiah makes it clear that those who have remained true to the Lord, and through whom God brings blessings to the earth, will escape the ravages of war mentioned in ch. 3:25, 26 (see chs. 10:20–22; 37:31, 32). At the time of Sennacherib’s invasions all the land of Judah, with the exception of the city of Jerusalem, fell temporarily into the hands of the Assyrian invaders. In Jerusalem alone a small remnant was left. Except for that remnant the

destruction of Judah would have been as complete as that of Sodom and Gomorrah (ch. 1:9). To this small remnant Isaiah gave the gracious promise: “The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward: for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this” (ch. 37:31, 32). As there would be a remnant in those days that would not fall into the hands of the enemy, so in these last days there will likewise be a remnant whom the Lord will preserve and who will not fall into the hands of the evil one (see on Deut. 18:15; Vol. IV, pp. 35, 36; see GC 37; PK 592; PP 283–288).

3. *Shall be called holy.* The great burden of Isaiah’s message was holiness. He saw the Lord seated upon His throne, and was deeply impressed with the holy character of God (ch. 6:3). The title he constantly applies to God is “the Holy One of Israel” (chs. 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9, 14). This exact title is found outside Isaiah only six times in the Bible (2 Kings 19:22; Ps. 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Jer. 50:29; 51:5). Isaiah’s constant objective was that Israel should forsake their sins and become a holy people.

Written among the living. Literally, “written for life.” God keeps a record of every individual on earth. The names of some are recorded for life in the book of life. See Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28; Eze. 13:9; Dan. 12:1; Mal. 3:16; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 21:27. All whose names are not blotted out of the book of life will enter God’s kingdom a holy people.

4. *The filth.* All who are willing to forsake their sins will be cleansed of their filthiness by the blood of Christ. “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9; cf. Ps. 51:2, 10, 11).

Burning. Heb. *ba’er*, literally, “fire,” but figuratively, “anger,” or “fury.” The recently discovered Dead Sea scroll 1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, p. 86) reads *s’r*, literally, “tempest,” or “storm,” but figuratively, “rage,” instead of *ba’er* (*b’r* in the unpointed, or vowelless, Hebrew text [see Vol. I, pp. 25, 26]). Owing to the similarity of the Hebrew letters transliterated *s* and *b*, one might easily be mistaken for the other, particularly in words such as *s’r* and *b’r*, where the figurative meanings of both are practically identical. The meaning of the final phrase of v. 4 is the same whichever is accepted as the original reading. The LXX and the Vulgate follow the Masoretic text, and read “burning.” The “cloud and smoke by day” and the “flaming fire by night” (v. 5) refer to the visible manifestation of the presence of God that accompanied His people on their journey from Egypt to Canaan (Ex. 13:21; Num. 9:15; 10:34; 14:14). As Jesus was with His people then to guide, to guard, and to bless, so He will be with His people today on their way to the heavenly Canaan (see Zech. 2:5).

5. *And the shining.* Dead Sea scroll 1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, pp. 86–88) omits these words, and on through “in the daytime” in v. 6. This is obviously an error on the part of the scribe who copied the Dead Sea scroll, or it was already missing in the document from which he made his copy. Such errors in copying are common in ancient manuscripts. The eye of the scribe skips a brief section of the document from which he is copying, between one word and the same word repeated a little farther on.

Upon all the glory. Like a pavilion, the overshadowing Presence will provide guidance, assurance, safety, and peace.

6. A tabernacle. The pavilion God promises His people will protect them from every trial, every difficulty, every danger, that may rise to threaten them (see Ps. 27:5; 91:1; Isa. 26:3, 4).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2, 3 GC 485; PK 592; 5T 476

3 GC 37

4 DA 107

5, 6 PP 283

6 PP 191

CHAPTER 5

1 *Under the parable of a vineyard God excuseth his severe judgement. 8 His judgments upon covetousness, 11 upon lasciviousness, 13 upon impiety, 20 and upon injustice. 26 The executioners of God's judgments.*

1. Now will I sing. Isaiah is at times a prophet of doom, and at times a prophet of hope. He speaks in kindly, endearing terms, and then in indignant words of anger and fury. In ch. 1:10 he addressed the leaders of Jerusalem as “rulers of Sodom” and the people as “people of Gomorrah.” Now he presents himself to Israel as a minstrel, singing a patriotic theme that would delight his people. Compare many of the psalms of David and the Song of Solomon (see Amos 6:5).

A song of my beloved. Like some of his fellow prophets, Isaiah was a skilled poet and presented many of his messages in the form of poetry and song (chs. 6:10–13; 9:2–21; 10:1–11, 13–19, 28–34; 11:1–9, 12–16; 12; 13:2–22; 14:4–21, 24–32; 15; 16:1–11; 17:1–6, 10–14; 18; 19:1–15; 21:1–15; 22:1–8; etc.).

My wellbeloved. The “wellbeloved” who had the vineyard was God; the vineyard was the nation of Israel (see Ps. 80:8–16; Matt. 21:33–41).

Fruitful hill. The “fruitful hill” was the land of Canaan, possibly with particular reference to Jerusalem.

2. He fenced it. The Heb. *‘azaq*, translated “fenced,” meant “to dig” in Biblical Hebrew. The translation “fenced” is based on post-Biblical Hebrew. The context makes clear, however, that the vineyard did have a fence, or “wall,” about it (Isa. 5:5; cf. Matt. 21:33). God set a protecting hedge about His people to safeguard them. Their location on the central highlands of Palestine, away from immediate contact with the nations about, was a safeguard. God’s law and His messages sent by the prophets were valuable safeguards designed to keep their steps from evil.

The stones. These, perhaps, represent the native peoples of the land, with their idolatrous religion and wicked customs.

The choicest vine. This represents the people of Israel, carefully selected by God Himself (see v. 7).

A tower. The tower represented the Temple (DA 596).

A winepress. This may be thought of as representing institutions like the schools of the prophets, which were God’s appointed means for inculcating such virtues and graces as righteousness, justice, honesty, and purity.

Grapes. The vineyard was planted for the purpose of bringing forth fruit, as was the fig tree in the parable of Luke 13:6–9 (see Matt. 21:19, 34). The grapes represent the

fruitage of character, a reflection of the divine character Israel was to exhibit before the world (see pp. 27–30).

Wild grapes. Instead of producing the fruits of the Spirit, Israel brought forth fruits of the flesh (see Gal. 5:19–23). Deeds of cruelty and injustice, dishonesty and deception, intemperance and immorality, a disregard for the rights of the poor and distressed, the taking advantage of widows and orphans—these were the evils the prophets constantly rebuked; these are the “wild grapes” here mentioned.

3. Men of Judah. Isaiah continues to address the men of Judah and Jerusalem (see chs. 1:1; 2:1; 3:1; 4:3, 4), those who professed to be the people of God. The song of the vineyard, as such, is now ended, and the Lord, the “beloved” of that song, speaks to His people through the prophet.

Judge. Zion is called upon to render a verdict upon herself (see Matt. 21:40, 41). God again invites His people to reason with Him (see Isa. 1:18). His plea is just, and they will of necessity admit His justice—and their own guilt—if they squarely face the facts.

4. What could have been done? A question is often the most effective means of bringing home a truth. Isaiah makes it clear by this searching question that the Lord did everything that could possibly have been done for Israel. He provided them with every facility for the development of a character that would resemble His own, and they had only themselves to blame for their failure (see pp. 30–33).

5. Take away the hedge. God would remove His protecting hand from His people and allow their enemies to despoil and scatter them. As a result of transgression the vineyard would become a desolate waste.

6. I will lay it waste. God did not Himself desolate Israel, but by the withdrawal of His protection, permitted enemies from without, now Assyria and later Babylon and Rome, to accomplish His will (see on 2 Chron. 18:18; 22:8). Later, Isaiah speaks of the Lord’s making use of Assyria as the “rod” of His “anger” and the “staff” of His “indignation” for the punishment of Israel (ch. 10:5–7).

Nor digged. Care is essential if a vineyard is to be productive. Without pruning and cultivation it must eventually deteriorate and become a desolate waste. The cessation of pruning and digging points to the withdrawal of the means of moral and spiritual culture provided by the Lord (Luke 13:8; John 15:2).

Briers and thorns. The once flourishing vineyard would become waste and desolate. Instead of grapes it would produce nothing but briers and thorns. Even the heavens would withhold their blessings, and the land would become parched and barren. It is God who imparts life and blessing (James 1:17). The withholding of His blessings results in desolation and death.

7. The vineyard. God leaves His people in no uncertainty as to the meaning of His message to them. The specific application of this message to the apostate nation is reminiscent of Nathan’s pointed rebuke to David. “Thou art the man” (2 Sam. 12:7), and of Jesus’ scathing denunciation of the Jews: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43).

The house of Israel. Although Isaiah’s mission was primarily to the kingdom of Judah, some of his messages were fully as applicable to the kingdom of Israel. The parable of the vineyard was certainly intended primarily for Judah (v. 3), but the message of rebuke and coming doom was as appropriate for Israel as for Judah. The term “Israel” is often employed to designate the nation of Judah (see Isa. 1:3; 4:2; 8:18; 31:6; Micah

1:14; 3:1; 6:2). But the fact that here both “the house of Israel” and “the men of Judah” are mentioned would seem to indicate that the message applies to both nations. If “Israel” here specifies the northern kingdom, this prophecy was made before 722 B.C., when the northern kingdom fell. As that nation was approaching its doom, it can hardly be denied that a prophet of the Lord whose main concern was with Judah would occasionally cast a prophetic glance at Judah’s northern neighbor in its hour of crisis.

He looked for judgment. God looked for His people to exercise justice, but saw instead bloodshed, injustice, and oppression on every hand.

A cry. The “cry” came from those who suffered oppression or whose innocent blood was being shed (see Gen. 4:10; Deut. 24:15; James 5:4; Rev. 6:9, 10). The righteous do not treat one another in such a way that cries for help must ascend to heaven.

8. Woe unto them. Isaiah here begins the enumeration of a series of woes to come upon Israel as the result of the offenses specifically mentioned in connection with each woe. These offenses are the “wild grapes” of v. 2. Not all the sins of the people can be listed; only those most characteristic of that evil age are named.

Join house to house. This graphic picture represents the sin of covetousness and greed. God originally intended Israel to be a nation of small landowners. To guard against the formation of large estates he had provided the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:13; 27:24) and the law of inheritance for heiresses (Num. 27:1–11; cf. 33:54; 36). But these provisions had been disregarded, with the result that instead of a large number of small landholders there had grown up a class of wealthy proprietors, and another, of poverty-stricken, landless laborers. Many of the people had been reduced to virtual slavery, and others, not yet slaves, were forced to pay exorbitant rents. Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, also denounced this evil (Micah 2:2).

Midst of the earth. That is, secure a monopoly. The wealthy classes had no interest in the welfare of the people at large. They were concerned with their own interests exclusively. They did not care even if the poor were entirely wiped out of existence. The situation was rapidly approaching the place where the poor would soon lose any holdings they had, and the wealthy would be left to enjoy the products of the land.

9. Many houses. Those who dispossessed their neighbors in order to increase their own estates would not have long to enjoy the results of their oppressive measures. Instead of finding prosperity and happiness they would encounter poverty and national ruin. Things would come to such a pass that large and beautiful estates would be left uninhabited and untended.

10. Ten acres. The Hebrew word for acre denotes specifically the land that could be plowed in one day by a yoke of oxen. A “bath” was 5.81 U.S. gal., or 22 liters (see Vol. I, p. 167). In other words, the ground would yield practically no return.

An homer. Ten ephahs (the same volume as 10 baths) made one homer; its yield was only one ephah. Instead of the land yielding an increase, the harvest would yield much less than the amount of seed sown. The picture presented is one of utter failure and ruin.

11. Strong drink. The second sin listed is drunkenness and intemperance. The professed people of God were addicted to strong drink. They arose early in order to have more time for drink. From morning till night many thought only of wine (see Isa. 22:13; 28:7; Hosea 4:11; Amos 6:6).

12. The harp. Or lyre. Music was prominent in their drunken revelry (see Amos 6:5, 6). Instead of being used to the glory of God, music became a powerful tool in the hand of the enemy to bring ruin to the soul.

They regard not. In their wild and wanton revels the consciences of these gluttons became seared, truth and right were forgotten, and their hearts were opened to every form of evil. Lust took the place of love, and violence and terror the place of righteousness.

13. Are gone into captivity. Literally, “go into captivity.” The captivity had not yet begun (see on v. 7). Isaiah here sets forth the reasons for the captivity. He does not present the captivity as an accomplished fact. The people of Israel were taken captive in 723/722.

No knowledge. Sin is folly. Those who engage in sin show themselves not to be wise, but foolish. Sin pays wages, not of prosperity, peace, and honor, but of ignominy, woe, and death. He who chooses sin, chooses death. Clearly and repeatedly God had pointed out what the results of transgression would be. Also, past experience had frequently shown the terrible fruitage of disobedience. Now the people of Israel and Judah were revealing their complete lack of “knowledge” by persisting in evil and thereby ensuring their own destruction. They were “destroyed for lack of knowledge,” because they had “rejected knowledge” (Hosea 4:6).

14. Hell. Heb. *she’ol*, the figurative abode of the dead (see on 2 Sam. 12:23; 22:6).

Enlarged herself. That is, in order to accommodate the increased number of arrivals from the land of the living.

Their pomp. The nobility of Jerusalem, the multitudes of the people, all who glorified in their present pomp and took pleasure in their iniquities, would alike go down to destruction.

15. The mean man. Compare ch. 2:9, 11, 17. Men of all classes would be humbled, the small as well as the great. The coming destruction would spare none.

16. Exalted in judgment. That is, honored and vindicated in His acts of justice. Sin ultimately results in humiliation, but in the end, righteousness and justice bring honor and glory. The acts of the Lord are such as to bring Him honor and glory before all the universe.

Sanctified in righteousness. Literally, “the holy God shows [Himself] holy in righteousness.” God’s righteous dealings with men prove Him to be holy in character. God’s people are to become like Him in character. Israel had lost sight of the fact that God is holy, and accordingly failed to understand either the importance or the meaning of righteousness. Conscious himself of God’s exalted character, Isaiah had the constant burden that Israel might also become holy and righteous. This ideal he keeps ever before them.

17. After their manner. The Hebrew may also be translated, “in their pasture” (see Eze. 34:11–15). Restored Israel is presented as lambs feeding happily and peacefully together.

The waste places. The Hebrew text of the remainder of v. 17 is obscure. The rendering of the RSV, “fatlings and kids shall feed among the ruins,” is based on the LXX and is appropriate to the context. According to this proposed rendering, lands that lie waste today will be transformed into pasture, in which domestic animals will feed together in peace.

18. Draw iniquity. The third woe is addressed to those who persist in their evil ways, fully aware of what they are doing. They are willingly bound to their iniquities with cords, as it were, and perversely resist every influence designed to set them free (see ch. 61:1).

A cart rope. A cart rope is thicker and stronger than a mere cord, and represents an advanced stage of rebelliousness in which the wicked are bound to their sins with bonds impossible to break. By persisting in evil they are sealing their own doom.

19. Let him make speed. These sinners boldly challenge God to go ahead with what He proposes to do about their spirit of perversity. They are defiant in their rebellion against Him. Isaiah constantly pointed out the certainty and nearness of the coming doom. The name of his second son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz (ch. 8:3), means “Speed the spoil, hasten the prey.” This name was intended as a sign to Israel of the nearness of the doom Isaiah so frequently foretold (ch. 8:18). But the people flouted the divine warnings. To Isaiah’s solemn messages of impending judgment they tauntingly replied, “Let God hasten the doom you keep telling us about. We would like to see it with our own eyes.” Thus they invited their own destruction. Compare Mal. 2:17; 3:13.

20. Call evil good. He who persistently resists the warnings that God in His mercy sends, will ultimately become so perverse in his thoughts that he is unable longer to distinguish between good and evil. He honestly thinks right is wrong and wrong is right. When perversity reaches such a pass, doom cannot be long delayed.

21. Wise in their own eyes. Confident that they know better than God, these perverse impenitents become “vain in their imaginations,” and their “foolish heart” is locked in darkness (Rom. 1:21; see DA 213). Their vaunted wisdom is consummate folly (Rom. 1:22). The world is filled with men who look with disdain upon those who believe God and obey His word. They find fault with everything God has done and all He proposes to do. It is men of this type who today are bringing woe upon themselves and the world about them. What these men need is to heed the sublime words of the psalmist, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10).

22. Mighty to drink wine. This woe is akin to that pronounced against the drinkers of wine in vs. 11, 12. But the woe there is simply against a group of abandoned revelers. This woe traces the relationship between drink and the injustices mentioned in v. 23 as resulting from its use. These men are “mighty” in their drinking and valiant in their practice of iniquity.

23. Justify the wicked. That is, “acquit the guilty.” Right means nothing to this class. They are willing to exonerate the most wicked of men for the sake of material gain. For a bribe they will pronounce a righteous man guilty and declare the wicked innocent. They are without moral scruples. Their mode of living is expensive, and they will stop at nothing to secure the needed means. A country has reached a sorry state when men of this type sit in the judgment seat.

24. The flame consumeth the chaff. Literally, “as dry grass designed for the flame sinks down.” Dead Sea scroll 1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, p. 86) reads, “as a flaming fire he sinks down.” The latter resembles the reading of the LXX, “burned together by an unrestrained fire.”

As rottenness. These men are utterly corrupt, and they will perish in their own corruption. As quickly as dry grass catches fire and is reduced to ashes, so will they be consumed.

The law of the Lord. Terrible are the results when the law of the Lord is rejected (see GC 586), for without it there is no way of determining what is good and what is evil. It was because these men had cast aside God's law that they sank so low in iniquity as to engage in the practices described in vs. 8–23.

Despised the word. God's word is always true and just. But these men despised His holy word (see on v. 21), and when men take this attitude there is little hope for them.

25. The anger of the Lord. See on Judges 2:20; 2 Kings 13:3; 17:11. It is a fearful thing to stir up the anger of the Lord. The Lord God is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex. 34:6). He ardently loves the sinner, but utterly abhors sin. He will not clear the guilty; in fact, He cannot do so and be consistent with His own character—unless and until the guilty person repents of his evil ways. When iniquity reaches a point beyond which there is no hope, divine forbearance ceases and the ministry of wrath begins (5T 208; 9T 13). At the time of Isaiah's message the iniquity of Israel had almost reached such a pass.

The hills did tremble. Probably a reference to some terrible earthquake that must have wrought great destruction and was regarded as a judgment from Heaven. Such an earthquake apparently took place at some time during the reign of Uzziah, possibly during the latter part of his reign, a few years before his death. This may have been the earthquake not long before which the prophet Amos received his call (Amos 1:1). The memory of this earthquake was still vivid in the minds of the people when Isaiah delivered this message.

Torn. Literally, "as offal," or "as refuse" (RSV). At the time the earthquake struck many fled into the streets, where they were killed and their bodies scattered about.

His hand is stretched out. That is, in judgment (see chs. 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). For the turning back of God's anger, see Ps. 85:4; Isa. 12:1; Hosea 14:4, and for His hand being stretched out to smite and destroy, see Ex. 3:20; 9:15; 2 Sam. 24:16; Isa. 14:27.

26. An ensign. Heb. *nes*, "signal," "sign," "standard." In ancient times the fastest means of communication was by signal fires or smoke displayed from hilltop to hilltop. Similarly God announces that He will send a message to the nations. This ancient means of communication provided Isaiah with a figure he frequently employed (see chs. 11:10, 12; 13:2; 18:3; 49:22; 62:10). God's "ensign" might be a sign on earth or in the heavens, and was any message the Lord might send, whether by angelic or human messenger, by natural phenomena, or by any other means He might employ to speak to the hearts of men. When God speaks to the nations they will respond by sending forth their armies (see ch. 5:26–30). In this case Isaiah refers particularly to the Assyrians, soon to invade Palestine (see ch. 10:5–7).

Hiss. Literally, "whistle." As the "ensign" was a signal to the eye, so the "whistle" would be to the ear. Both would be understood by the nations, which would respond speedily to the Lord's call.

27. None shall be weary. The picture of vs. 27–30 is of an army rapidly advancing (see ch. 10:28–33). The army presses on in perfect order toward the accomplishment of its appointed task. Nothing would hinder it. Compare the manner in which God hindered the Egyptians as they advanced contrary to His will (Ex. 14:23–25).

Among them. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, p. 86) omits this expression, as does the LXX.

28. *Whose arrows are sharp.* The army is ready for battle. Their weapons are sharp, their horses are in condition for the long, hard journey, and the wheels of their chariots revolve like a whirlwind.

29. *Their roaring.* That is, their battle cry. The army approaches like a lion—fierce, bold, strong, and determined. The prey will not escape. God has given this army its marching orders, and the divine purpose will be accomplished.

30. *They shall roar.* The prophet here turns to another figure of speech, comparing the approach of the Assyrians to the waters of a flood that sweeps all before it and leaves desolation and ruin in its wake (see ch. 8:7, 8).

Behold darkness and sorrow. The figurative roaring of the sea is accompanied by the darkness and terror of the tempest.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 COL 214, 284; GC 20; PK 17

2 COL 215

3–7AA 15; COL 290; PK 19

4 COL 218, 298; DA 596; GC 20; 1T 510; 2T 123; 5T 117, 195, 240

7 COL 214, 285, 298; PK 17, 711; 8T 114

8, 11, 12 PK 306

11–138T 114

20 AA 431; GC 192, 229, 557; GW 264; MH 346; ML 87; PK 178; 1T 332; 3T 207, 324; 5T 62, 438

20, 21 PP 360; 8T 114

22 PK 306

22–24MH 346

23, 24 PP 360

24 8T 97, 115

CHAPTER 6

1 *Isaiah, in a vision of the Lord in his glory, 5 being terrified, is confirmed for his message.*
9 *He sheweth the obstinacy of the people unto their desolation.* 13 *A remnant shall be saved.*

1. *In the year.* This was probably 740/739 B.C. The date is obviously an item of importance. In the year that Uzziah concluded his long reign of 52 years the Lord accorded the young man Isaiah a vision confirming his call to the prophetic office and gave him a message of reproof for Israel (PK 305–307; 5T 749, 750). The time was one of peril and crisis. The great Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III had come to the throne in 745, and almost immediately began a series of campaigns that led to the conquest of much of Western Asia (see p. 88). In 745 he marched against Babylonia, in 744 he went against the country to the northeast of Assyria, and between 743 and 738 he made annual campaigns against the northwest. In his annals Tiglath-pileser frequently mentions Azria'u from Iauda, generally believed to be Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah, who was evidently the leading spirit in resistance to Assyrian aggression among the countries of the Mediterranean region of Asia. Menahem of Israel is also mentioned. It was in the midst of Tiglath-pileser's campaigns against the West that Uzziah died. The man who had taken so strong a stand against Assyria was gone. What would now be the fate of Judah? Must all the world fall a prey to Assyrian arms? Because of their sins the professed people of God had forfeited divine protection. Assyrian might appeared invincible, and it seemed to

be only a question of time before Judah would be overwhelmed and Assyria would control the world.

The Lord sitting upon a throne. This manifestation of the divine glory took place upon the occasion of one of Isaiah's visits to the sacred precincts of the Temple (PK 307). God designed that Isaiah should catch a wider vision than merely what he saw taking place about him. God would have him know that in spite of all the might of Assyria, He was still supreme upon His throne and in control of the affairs of earth. Moses was accorded a similar vision of God (Ex. 24:10). More than a century before Isaiah's time the prophet Micaiah saw the Lord seated upon His throne, with the armies of heaven standing by Him (1 Kings 22:19). Earlier during the reign of Uzziah, Amos also saw the Lord standing by the altar in the Temple court (Amos 9:1). Later, during the Babylonian captivity, both Daniel (Dan. 7:9) and Ezekiel (Eze. 1:1; 10:1–5) saw visions of the Lord upon His throne, as did John on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 4:1–6). When perils encompass God's people and the powers of darkness seem about to prevail, God calls them to look up to Him, seated upon His throne and directing in the affairs of heaven and earth, in order that they may take hope and courage. See Ed 173.

His train filled the temple. At the time he was accorded this vision Isaiah stood in the Temple court praying (PK 307). Before him the doors of the Temple appeared to open, and in the most holy place he saw God Himself seated upon His throne. The Heb. *hekal*, the word commonly used of the Temple, designates it as the "temple," or "palace," of the great King of heaven (see Ps. 11:4; 29:9; Hab. 2:20). The "train" is the garment of God's infinite glory. John (ch. 12:41) applies this vision to Christ.

2. The seraphims. Heb. *śeraphim*, literally, "burning [ones]," or "shining [ones]."

Six wings. Compare Rev. 4:8, where the living creatures that John saw about the throne also have six wings. The living creatures seen by Ezekiel, however, are represented as having four wings (Eze. 1:6). Isaiah sees the angels with two wings covering the face, in an attitude of homage and reverence before God, two wings covering the feet, and two used for flight. Ezekiel sees the living creatures with two wings covering the body and two wings stretched upward (Eze. 1:11).

3. Holy, holy, holy. The angels about the throne of God are impressed with His outstanding attribute—perfect holiness of character. The living creatures John saw about the throne likewise cried, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" (Rev. 4:8). God sought to impress upon the mind of Isaiah a concept of His holiness, in order that the prophet should keep this attribute of the divine character constantly before His people, that they might thereby be encouraged to put away their sins and aspire to holiness. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs (see Vol. I, p. 31; Vol. IV, p. 86) omits the words "and said," and has the word "holy" twice only.

Full of his glory. Compare ch. 40:5. A realization of the glory and holiness of God will lead men to stand in humility before Him. At a time when darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people (ch. 60:2), Isaiah looked forward to the hour when all the earth will be covered with God's glory.

4. The posts of the door. Literally, "the pivots of the thresholds," that is, the sockets in which the leaves of the door were held. The very foundations of the Temple seemed to shake at the voice of God.

Smoke. As of incense, reflecting the luminous glory of God. Compare Ex. 19:18, where Mt. Sinai is covered with smoke and quakes greatly, and Rev. 15:8, where the temple is filled with smoke because of the glory of God.

5. Woe is me! Isaiah had been pronouncing woes upon the sinners among God's people (ch. 5:8–30). Now, finding himself in the awesome presence of a holy God, he becomes profoundly aware of his own imperfection of character. The same experience will come to us as we draw nigh to God.

Mine eyes have seen. This vision of God in His holiness and glory gave Isaiah a conception of the sinfulness and insignificance of man. Looking upon God and then upon himself, he realized his own nothingness in comparison with the Eternal, his guilt in the presence of the "Holy One of Israel" (ch. 5:24). Moses hid his face when he came into the presence of God (Ex. 3:6), and Job abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes (Job 42:6).

6. The altar. That is, the golden altar of incense (see on Ex. 30:1–5), essentially an altar of intercession (see on Ex. 30:6–8). John saw prayers from the hearts of repentant sinners presented with incense before the throne of grace (Rev. 8:3, 4).

7. Touched thy lips. The coal from the altar represented the purifying and refining power of divine grace. It signified, as well, as transformation of character. Henceforth the one great desire of Isaiah for his people was that they too might experience the same work of cleansing and transformation. Our greatest need today is for lips touched with holy fire from the altar of God.

8. Send me. Isaiah's response was immediate. Like Paul, Isaiah had one great desire for Israel—that they might be saved (see Rom. 10:1). He knew that judgment was soon to fall upon a guilty people, and longed to see them forsake their sins. Henceforth, Isaiah's one task in life was to bear God's message of warning and hope to Israel that they might catch a vision of the love and holiness of God, and be saved as a result.

9. Hear ye indeed. Like many other prophets, Isaiah faced a difficult task. God warned him that the message he bore would largely go unheeded, that in spite of all he might do the people would continue in their evil ways. Apparent failure would be his unhappy lot, but certainly not more so than with the ministry of Jesus (Matt. 13:14, 15; John 12:37–41) and that of Paul (Acts 28:26, 27). These words of Isaiah are quoted repeatedly as applicable also to NT times. Isaiah nevertheless had the assurance that his work would not be entirely in vain, for God revealed to him that a remnant would be saved (chs. 1:9; 6:13; 10:21). Paul, however, realized that in his day the Jews had made their final decision and been cut off as the people of God (Acts 28:26–28; Rom. 9–11).

10. Make the heart. The spiritual perceptions of Israel would prove to be so dull that they would fail to heed even the most stirring messages Heaven should send. The situation would be similar to that of Pharaoh when his heart was hardened and he refused to comply with the message of the Lord given by Moses (see on Ex. 4:21). In the days of Isaiah it was not the Lord who blinded the eyes of the people or made their heart heavy; they brought this condition upon themselves by their rejection of the warnings God sent them. With each rejection of truth the heart becomes harder and the spiritual perceptions more dull, until at length there is utter inability to perceive spiritual things. God takes no delight in the death of the wicked, and does everything possible to turn them from their evil ways, in order that they might live and not die (Eze. 18:23–32; 33:11; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

11. Lord, how long? Isaiah faced a bleak prospect. He could hardly believe that the situation the Lord had described could persist for any length of time. Surely, after a time, the people would come to their senses and accept God's message of salvation and deliverance. Hence his inquiry.

Until the cities. The sad answer the Lord gave Isaiah was that the situation would prevail till Judah had destroyed itself. There was no hope of repentance, no hope of survival. A remnant would be saved, and for the sake of that faithful group Isaiah was to proclaim his message of salvation. But the nation as a whole would refuse to turn from its evil ways. And that refusal would in the end bring utter and irretrievable ruin. The cities would be without inhabitants and the land utterly desolate and forsaken. Sin brings not happiness but woe, not prosperity but ruin, not life but death. This is the great lesson God's spokesmen have brought to the world again and again (see Lev. 26:31–33; Isa. 1:20; 5:9; 14:17, 20; Jer. 4:7, 20, 23–27; 7:34; 9:11; 26:6, 18; Micah 3:12; etc.).

12. Removed men far away. This refers to the coming captivity. First by Assyria in Isaiah's day, and then by Babylon a century later, the people would be carried away into foreign lands. This had been foretold by Moses, conditionally, before Israel ever entered the Promised Land (Lev. 26:33; Deut. 4:26–28; 28:64).

A great forsaking. The land God had intended to blossom as a rose would become waste, and would be forsaken of its inhabitants. Instead of prosperity there would be ruin.

13. A tenth. Because certain details of the Hebrew of v. 13 are not altogether clear, its translation and interpretation are difficult. A literal translation would read: "And yet in her [that is, the land; see v. 12] shall be a tenth and she [the land, or the tenth] shall be again [or remain, or return], and she [the land, or the tenth] shall be for a burning down like a terebinth and like an oak, which in the felling a stump [is left] in her [the land, or the tenth; or "in them," meaning the terebinth and the oak] and a holy seed in her stump." The basic meaning of the verse is clear. Verses 11, 12 have described the desolation of Judah at the time of the Babylonian captivity. Though the land would be left utterly desolate, this experience would not mean the end of Israel as a nation (see Jer. 4:27; 5:10, 18; 30:11; 46:28). She would rise again. The discouraging picture of a people persisting in their perversity, blind and deaf to the messages Isaiah was to bear to them until they should be swept away into captivity, here blends into one of assurance that the land will not remain wholly forsaken forever and that God's purpose for her will eventually be accomplished (PK 309, 310). Compare the name of Isaiah's first-born son, Shear-jashub, which means literally, "[a] remnant [shall] return." The thought that a "remnant" would "return" recurs again and again throughout the book (chs. 4:2, 3; 10:21; etc.). No particular significance is to be attached to the fact that the remnant would be "a tenth" of the original. In the Bible, ten is a small, sometimes indefinite, number, and a tenth part would, accordingly, be a small number.

A teil tree. Probably the terebinth, a tree from which turpentine was secured. The tree might be stripped and nothing left of it save the stump. But from that stump a new tree would grow. The message therefore was one of encouragement and hope. Isaiah's work was not to be entirely in vain; in the end a remnant would be saved.

The holy seed. In the "stump" there would remain life, and this would ultimately spring forth again and become a new tree. A tree is a common OT figure for God's people (see Isa. 65:22; Jer. 17:8; cf. Dan. 4:14, 23). From this "holy seed" a new and glorious Israel would rise.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–13CE 90; CM 59; TM 213

1 MB 43

1–5CT 374; PK 307

1–7MH 432; 8T 281

1–8GW 21; 5T 750; 7T 153

3 GC 471; PK 310, 313, 371; 5T 751

5 DA 246; GC 471

5–8CE 90; CM 59; GW 22

6, 7 AA 208; CT 370; FE 207; TM 256; 4T 529; 5T 252, 581; 6T 88; 7T 241, 251; 8T 29, 37, 297

6–8FE 472; 6T 325

6–11PK 308

7 PK 314

8 CE 20, 26, 27; CH 32; GW 451; MB 109; MH 148; MYP 25; TM 413; 6T 49, 325, 333; 8T 33, 185; 9T 46, 135

11–13PK 309

CHAPTER 7

1 *Ahaz, being troubled with fear of Rezin and Pekah, is comforted by Isaiah.* 10 *Ahaz, having liberty to choose a sign, and refusing it, hath for a sign, Christ promised.* 17 *His judgment is prophesied to come by Assyria.*

1. In the day of Ahaz. See table, Vol. II, p. 77. This message was apparently delivered about the year 734 B.C., near the beginning of Ahaz' reign (see on v. 16). For the historical background of events here mentioned, see Vol. II, p. 86.

Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah. Assyrian sources indicate that Uzziah had taken a strong stand against Assyria, and probably also his son Jotham, but that Ahaz was friendly. The latter sent gold and silver he took from the Temple and from his own palace to Tiglath-pileser in order to purchase Assyrian aid (see on 2 Kings 16:5–10). We know from 2 Kings 15:29 that Pekah of Israel was anti-Assyrian, because Tiglath-pileser came against him; and from Assyrian sources we likewise know that this was also true of Rezin of Syria. Probably most of the nations of Western Asia were at this time united in an alliance against Assyria, and the attack of Pekah and Rezin on Ahaz was intended to depose him and set up a new king, and perhaps to force Judah into the coalition against Assyria.

Could not prevail. According to 2 Chron. 28:5–15 Judah had suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of Pekah and Rezin, and Elath, on the Gulf of Aqabah, had fallen into the hands of Syria (2 Kings 16:6). But, although besieged, the city of Jerusalem itself was not taken (2 Kings 16:5).

2. It was told. That is, it was reported to Ahaz, the living representative of the house of David. The attack was directed particularly against the dynasty of David, since it was the purpose to depose Ahaz and set up a new king, of the house of Tabeal, on the throne of Judah (v. 6).

His heart. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs lacks these words.

Moved. Or, “shook.” Ahaz was terror stricken at the prospect of being driven from the throne (v. 6). An apostate, he did not trust in God, and it appeared to him that his kingdom was soon to fall.

3. Go forth now. Although Ahaz himself was a wicked king, the Lord had no intention of allowing the dynasty of David to become extinct (see Gen. 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:12, 13). Therefore Isaiah was sent to the king to inform him of the Lord's purpose to preserve Judah and to defeat its invaders.

Shear-jashub. Literally, "[a] remnant [shall] return." Isaiah and his sons were ordained of God as signs to the people (ch. 8:18). The same was true of Isaiah's contemporary, Hosea, whose children also bore significant names (Hosea 1:4–9). Isaiah constantly kept this message of the return of the remnant before the people (chs. 4:2, 3; 10:21; etc.).

The upper pool. The water supply of the city was always a matter of importance at a time of siege. The "upper pool" has been identified with the upper pool of Gihon, known as St. Mary's Well or the Virgin's Fount (see Jerusalem in Israelite Times). It was situated in the Kidron Valley on the east side of Ophel and south of the Temple area. It was from Gihon that Hezekiah later made his famous aqueduct, the Siloam tunnel (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:30), which brought the water to the Siloam pool within the city. At the time of Ahaz this source of water would be outside the city at a time of siege, and undoubtedly some steps were then contemplated as to how the water might be brought into the city and denied to an enemy without.

4. Be quiet; fear not. With the help of the Lord of heaven there was no need to fear. But the king refused to trust in God, and consequently gave way to despair when confronted by circumstances with which he knew not how to cope.

The two tails. An expression of contempt. The ostensibly vigorous but nevertheless effete kingdoms of Israel and Syria, and their kings, were but the smoldering, smoking remnants of firebrands. They had almost burned themselves out. One more flicker and they would be gone. The God of heaven now foretold their doom in order that Ahaz might be able to pursue an intelligent policy with respect to them. It was the ascendant power of Assyria, not the waning kingdoms of Syria or Israel, that Ahaz needed to take into consideration. During the next 40 or 50 years Judah would be all but swallowed up by Assyria, yet Ahaz was pursuing a policy that would inevitably play into Assyrian hands.

6. Against Judah. The plan was to conquer Judah and take it over for themselves.

Set a king. Ahaz was to be dethroned, the dynasty of David brought to an end, and a new king, "the son of Tabeal," placed upon the throne. The identity of this new king is not known, but he is thought to have been a Syrian since the name "Tabeal" is Aramaic, and means "good [is] god." Israel and Syria had agreed between themselves upon a new puppet monarch to sit upon David's throne.

7. It shall not stand. The house of David was not to fall. The plan proposed by Israel and Syria was directed against God, and could not succeed. God had other plans for the house of David (see Gen. 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:12). He would not permit men to interfere with His purpose for Judah, or to terminate the dynasty through which the Messiah was to come.

8. Within threescore and five years. The meaning of this prediction is uncertain. According to the chronology of the kings followed tentatively in this commentary (see Vol. II, pp. 77, 143, 749), the prediction was made about 734 B.C., and no chronology places the accession of Ahaz earlier than 742. Yet by 722 Israel, the northern kingdom, had come to its end with the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians. Some modern scholars have

concluded that the clause introduced by these words was inserted by a later hand. They point to the fact that this statement seems to interrupt the flow of thought between vs. 8 and 9. But there is no certain evidence that such an insertion was made.

Assuming that the number 65 was in the original text of Isaiah, and there is no conclusive reason for thinking that it was not, two possible fulfillments have been suggested. Sixty-five years after 734, inclusive, would be 670, when Esarhaddon (681–669) reigned over Assyria. It is a fact that Esarhaddon (and after him his successor Ashurbanipal, the Biblical Asnapper) had certain Mesopotamian peoples transported to the former territory of the northern kingdom (Ezra 4:2–10). This was long after Israel had come to its end as a nation (723/722 B.C.). The Assyrian policy of scattering subject peoples was designed to obliterate old national identities and loyalties. So many Israelites of the ten tribes were absorbed into the neighboring populations that they have frequently been referred to as “lost” tribes. It is probable that some of them later joined the captives from Judah and returned with them after the Exile, but as individuals in a Jewish community that was the continuation of the old kingdom of Judah, not of Israel.

Another interpretation has been suggested—that the 65 years may have begun about the time of the earthquake, during the reign of Uzziah or Jeroboam II. This earthquake was the token of the Lord’s judgments upon Israel mentioned by Amos. If so, Isaiah here merely refers to the fall of Samaria in 723/722. This is possible, but not provable, because the exact date of the earthquake is not known. Since no definite starting point of the 65 years is given, it is not possible today—nor is it necessary—to determine the meaning of the prediction. In all probability a specific prophecy such as this was clear and meaningful to the people in whose day it was given. Obviously, it was more important for them to understand it than it is for us.

9. *If ye will not believe.* It was apparent that Ahaz did not believe the assurance of God that Pekah and Rezin would not succeed in their plans. He was still afraid. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), much less to submit to His wise and gracious leadership.

11. *Ask thee a sign.* God made this offer to strengthen Ahaz’ faith. Signs such as these are often given to establish the faith of weak or prejudiced minds.

Ask it either in the depth. The Masoretes (see Vol. I, pp. 34, 35) understood the consonantal Hebrew text *h’mq sh’lh* to stand for *ha’emeq she’alah*, literally, “[in] the depth ask.” Late revisions of the LXX and Greek translators several centuries earlier than the Masoretes, however, took *h’mq sh’lh* to read *ha’emeq she’olah*, “[to] the depth of Sheol.” There is no way of knowing which is correct, though the grammatical balance of the words in Hebrew favors the reading “[to] the depth of Sheol.” For the meaning of Sheol, see on 2 Sam. 12:23; 22:6; Prov. 15:11. For other instances where a contrast is drawn between the height of heaven and the depth of Sheol, see Deut. 32:22; Job 11:8; Ps. 86:13; 139:8.

12. *I will not ask.* Ahaz refused to be persuaded. He did not want to believe, and he wanted nothing that might help him believe. He had fixed his policy, he was determined to carry it out, and he feared anything that might influence him to change it. The help he sought was that of Assyria, not of God.

Tempt the Lord. That is, put the Lord to the test by demanding a sign. Ahaz herewith revealed his stubbornness and rebellion against God. God offered to help and guide him,

but he chose to rely on Assyria for help instead. Ahaz was determined to have nothing to do with God, and was making that fact altogether clear.

14. The Lord himself shall give. Ahaz was to have a sign from the Lord in spite of himself, but the sign would be of the Lord's choosing. For the encouragement of those who would remain faithful in the years of crisis that lay ahead, God saw fit to provide assurance that He would be with them. One such sign the nation already had in Shear-jashub, the first son of Isaiah (see on v. 3; cf. ch. 8:18), whose name meant "[a] remnant [shall] return," and whose presence was a constant reminder that in the coming Assyrian invasions a remnant would be saved.

You. In the Hebrew, "you" is plural. It appears from v. 13 that "you" here refers to the "house of David," that is, to the royal house of Judah, of which Ahaz was the living representative. It appears also from vs. 1, 2, that the expression "house of David" designates Ahaz himself. Accordingly, some have taken the plural "you" of v. 14 to be a form of address comparable to our editorial "we," and conclude that the "sign" was therefore given to Ahaz personally, as the living representative of the "house of David" and in his capacity as king and leader of Judah. Others have suggested that the plural "you" refers to Ahaz and his successors on the throne of David.

Sign. Heb. *'oth*, a "sign," "token," "mark," "reminder." In the OT an *'oth* may or may not be a miracle. Essentially, as with the rainbow of the covenant (Gen. 9:12), the Sabbath (Ex. 31:13; Eze. 20:12, 20), the blood of the paschal lamb upon the doorposts (Ex. 12:13), and the censers of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16:38), the *'oth* was a visible *reminder* of an important spiritual truth. The "signs" in Egypt (Ex. 4:8; 7:3; Deut. 4:34; etc.) and those given Gideon (Judges 6:17) and Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:8, 9; Isa. 38:7, 8) were miraculous tokens designed to elicit cooperation and to inspire faith. Without exception, a "sign" consisted of an object or occurrence the purpose of which was to confirm, or to be a reminder of, the spiritual truth or prophetic message linked with it by Inspiration. The miraculous element might or might not be present. It is of the very essence of a "sign" that it be literally visible to the person or persons to whom it is given, so that in turn the eye of faith may perceive God's will and lay firm hold on His promises. Whenever anyone requested a "sign," as God now invited Ahaz to do (Isa. 7:11), or when God Himself selected the "sign," it was, without exception, literally visible to those to whom it was addressed.

In this connection it is important to note Isaiah's declaration, "I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts" (ch. 8:18), a declaration whose significance is clarified by the fact that it occurs in the same prophetic sequence as the "sign" promised in ch. 7:14. The names Isaiah, Shear-jashub, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz—which mean, respectively, "The Lord will save," "A remnant shall return," and "Speed the spoil, hasten the plunder"—all spoke eloquently of coming events related to the imminent and repeated Assyrian invasions of Judah. Isaiah and his sons were "signs" designed of God to secure, if possible, the cooperation of Ahaz and Judah during the years of crisis that accompanied the collapse and captivity of the northern kingdom, Israel.

A virgin. Heb. *'almah*. This word, singular and plural, appears but nine times in the OT (Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; 1 Chron. 15:20; Ps. 46, superscription; 68:25; Prov. 30:19; S. of Sol. 1:3; 6:8; Isa. 7:14), and never in a context where its precise meaning is certain. This

uncertainty has occasioned difference of opinion as to whether *‘almah* should be translated “virgin” or “young woman.” Elaborate attempts have been made to prove that it means exclusively one or the other, but evidence thus far advanced in either direction has not been sufficient to convince all Hebrew scholars. Hebrew lexicographers are agreed that *‘almah* is from the root *‘alam*, “to be [sexually] mature,” and that the word *‘almah* denotes a “young woman,” implying ability to bear children. Both *‘almah* and *‘elem*, the masculine form of the word, clearly denote physical maturity, but there is no absolute evidence as to whether they imply virginity or indicate marital status. It may be noted, however, that in S. of Sol. 6:8, 9 “virgins,” *‘alamoth* (plural of *‘alahmah*), are classed with “queens” and “concubines” in contrast with an “undefiled” young woman. According to the Hebrew the *‘almah* of Isa. 7:14 may already have conceived (see below, “Shall conceive”), and if she were yet a virgin when Isaiah spoke we would then be confronted with another miraculous birth similar to that of Jesus, which would create a profound theological problem. For further information, see *Problems in Bible Translation*, pp. 152–157.

The Hebrew term specifically descriptive of virginity is *bethulah*, which means strictly “virgin” and nothing else in the 50 instances where it appears in the OT. In Bible usage a *bethulah* was, by definition, a marriageable woman, whether young or old, though probably young, who had remained separate from men. Not once is the word *‘almah* used with reference to virginity as *bethulah* and its derivative forms are used. *Bethulah* has no cognate masculine equivalent, but is often coupled with *bachur*, “choice young man,” or “excellent young man.” *Bachur* and *bethulah* depict the highest Hebrew ideals of young manhood and young womanhood, as *‘elem* and *‘almah* denote physical maturity. Without a single exception, where moral integrity and virginity are clearly referred to, *bachur* and *bethulah* are used; *‘elem* and *‘almah* are never so used.

Isaiah speaks of God rejoicing over His people as “a young man [*bachur*] marrieth a virgin [*bethulah*]” (Isa. 62:5). It is most significant that Zion as a type of God’s people, a “chaste virgin,” *parthenos* (2 Cor. 11:2), is referred to in 2 Kings 19:21; Isa. 37:22; 62:5; Jer. 14:17; 31:4; Lam. 1:15; etc., as a *bethulah*—but never as an *‘almah*. In fact, God’s people are never spoken of figuratively as an *‘almah*; He will be satisfied with nothing less than a church properly described as a *bethulah*. God is not concerned so much with age as with character. Isaiah uses *bethulah* altogether five times (chs. 23:4, 12; 37:22; 47:1; 62:5), and had he intended the “young woman” of ch. 7:14 to be understood as a “virgin” in the strict sense of the word, he might logically be expected to use *bethulah* here as well. In quoting Isa. 7:14, however, Matthew uses the word *parthenos*, which strictly means “virgin.” As to his reasons for so doing, see on Matt. 1:23.

The context of Isa. 7:14, together with the foregoing facts relative to the words translated “sign” and “virgin,” makes it certain that the prediction here made had an immediate application within the framework of the historical circumstances set forth in the chapter. Matthew’s reference to the prediction makes it equally certain that this prediction also points forward to the Messiah. Many OT prophecies have a twofold application such as this, first to the more immediate future and then to the more remote future (see on Deut. 18:15).

In the narrative of Isa. 7 nothing further is said as to the identity of the “young woman” to whom Isaiah here refers. However, in Hebrew she is spoken of as “*the young woman*,” indicating some particular young woman. Whether she was present upon this occasion or whether Ahaz or even Isaiah knew her identity at the time is, however, not certain (see Gesenius’ *Hebrew Grammar*, § 126; cf. Amos 5:19, where “a lion” reads in the Hebrew, “the lion,” that is, the particular lion that chased the fleeing man). On the basis of the silence of ch. 7 concerning the identity of the “young woman” referred to in v. 14, some suggest that the prediction met its fulfillment in a person unknown to us but well known to both Ahaz and Isaiah. On the belief that the “sign” called for must needs be miraculous in nature and that the word ‘*almah*’ means strictly “virgin” and not simply “young woman,” some have suggested that the literal fulfillment of the prediction in the days of Isaiah required that the mother of the promised son be, like Mary, a virgin in the strict sense of the term. To be sure, it would be entirely possible for God to bring this about if He so chose. But such a child would, like Christ, represent a union of the divine and human natures, and thus deprive Christ of His unique status as *the* divine-human Son of God.

In view of the fact that Ahaz was a young man 21 years of age at this time (2 Kings 16:1, 2; cf. Vol. II, p. 77), others have suggested that this particular “young woman” may have been his own wife, or some other young woman in the royal entourage present on the occasion. Still others suggest that Isaiah refers to his own wife, “the prophetess” of ch. 8:3, who may have accompanied him on his mission to meet King Ahaz (see on ch. 8:3). The fact that Isaiah’s prophetic ministry continued for half a century or more after this incident, which occurred early in his ministry (PK 382; cf. chs. 1:1; 6:1), makes it certain that he himself was then a young man, and that his wife might properly be referred to at that time as “*the young woman*.”

Shall conceive. The Hebrew verb is in the perfect tense, which ordinarily denotes completed action, and would normally be translated “has conceived.” However, the prophets often used the perfect tense to denote future action. They were so confident of the fulfillment of their predictions that they spoke of future events as already accomplished (see Vol. I, p. 27). On this basis, “shall conceive” would be a more accurate English translation. It is not possible to determine which translation reflects the intent of Inspiration more accurately, but many consider that the most natural interpretation of the Hebrew indicates that conception of the sign child had already occurred at the time Isaiah spoke. The sequence of tenses in v. 14 seems to require this. Those who consider “the young woman” to be Ahaz’ own wife or another young woman of the royal family, suggest that this prediction constituted a “sign” to Ahaz in that Isaiah, presumably, would not know that conception had occurred and that neither of them could, at this time, know the sex of the unborn child. But it is important to remember that

a “sign” is by no means necessarily miraculous in character (see the foregoing on v. 14 under “Sign”).

Shall call. The generally accepted Hebrew text reads literally, “she shall call,” though a number of manuscripts have “thou shalt call.” According to the latter reading the yet unborn child would be a member of the royal family, and his mother either the wife of Ahaz or some other young woman whose offspring it was Ahaz’ prerogative to name. However, the reading, “she shall call,” is more probably correct.

Immanuel. Heb. *‘Immanu ‘El*, literally, “God with us,” and meaning “God [is] with us,” that is, as the context makes clear, to deliver us from our enemies. For the Messianic import of the name, see on Matt. 1:23. Like the name Isaiah, which means “the Lord will save [Judah],” Shear-jashub (v. 3), “[a] remnant [shall] return,” that is, Judah would not fall with the northern kingdom, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, “Speed the spoil, hasten the plunder,” the name Immanuel was a sign name ordained of God to testify of His purpose for Judah at this time and of the nature of events soon to transpire. See further on ch. 8:1–3, 8, 10. The Immanuel sign would testify to God’s presence with His people to guide, to protect, and to bless. While other nations went down in defeat, Judah would be sustained; while Israel was to perish, Judah would live. When Sennacherib came against the land of Judah to destroy it, Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, no doubt found in Isaiah’s words regarding Immanuel a source of confidence and strength. In his message of encouragement to the people of Jerusalem Hezekiah assures them, “*with us* is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles” (2 Chron. 32:7, 8).

15. Butter and honey. The “butter” of Bible times was curded milk, considered a delicacy in many parts of the Orient even today (see Ex. 3:17; Judges 5:25). A land of “milk and honey” was a land of plenty. Thus the mention here of eating curded milk and honey implies an abundance of food. The land was to be desolate, but there would be adequate food for the few who remained in the land following the Assyrian invasion (Isa. 7:22).

That he may know. Literally, “at [Heb. *le*] his knowing,” meaning “when he knows.” The preposition *le* has the same meaning in Gen. 24:63, “at the eventide”; Gen. 3:8, “in the cool”; Gen. 8:11, “in the evening”; 2 Sam. 11:1, “at the time”; etc. When the child that was to be called Immanuel became old enough “to refuse the evil, and choose the good,” he would have “butter and honey” to eat. Whether this refers to the age of 2 or 3, when a child’s tastes have become pronounced, or the age of about 12, when moral perception is well developed, is not certain. Two or three years hence would be about 732 B.C., and 12 years, about 722 (see on Isa. 7:1). Damascus fell in 732, and Samaria ten years later. The few who were not then carried captive would find plenty to eat (see on vs. 21, 22) in the desolate land (see on vs. 17–20, 23–25). See on ch. 8:4.

16. For. Heb. *ki*. This connective requires that the “child” of v. 16 be identified with the “son” of vs. 14, 15, and not the “son” Shear-jashub, of v. 3, as some have suggested. The word *ki* renders v. 16 inseparable from that which immediately precedes it. Furthermore, the definite article “the” preceding the word “child” of v. 16 requires that the last preceding child, in this case Immanuel, be here understood.

Before the child. See on v. 15.

Forsaken of both her kings. Isaiah had admonished Ahaz not to be afraid of Rezin and Pekah, the “two tails of these smoking firebrands” (v. 4). Now he declares that the child soon to be born would be not more than about two years old when these kings lost their thrones. If Ahaz came to the throne in 736/735, it may have been either late in 735 or early in 734 that this interview with Isaiah took place. In the year 735 Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria was engaged in a campaign against Urartu in the regions of Armenia, in 734 he fought against Philistia, and in 733 and 732 against Damascus (see Vol. II, pp. 61, 62). Assyria was putting forth a relentless effort to secure control of all northwestern Asia. In their anti-Assyrian campaign Pekah and Rezin were arrayed against Ahaz, who had allied himself with Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 16:5–7). Judah need not fear if her leaders would only trust the promise implicit in the name Immanuel, “God [is] with us.” By the time the sign child Immanuel should be two years or so of age, the reigns of Pekah and Rezin would be at an end. That would be in 732, the second of the two years in which Tiglath-pileser waged war against Damascus. Compare Isa. 8:3, 4, where the time of the fulfillment of this prophecy is again foretold. See 2 Kings 15:30; 16:9.

17. The Lord shall bring. Ahaz has already made it plain that he will not turn to the Lord for help. Instead, he plans to rely on Assyria (Kings 16:5–7). But Isaiah warns him that Assyria will not prove a help to Judah, but rather a source of distress (Isa. 7:17–20; 8:7, 8; 10:6). Later, when Assyria invades Judah, the latter would seek help from Egypt, but that would likewise prove in vain (chs. 30:1–3; 31:1–3, 8). All these things the prophet now endeavors to make clear to the king.

King of Assyria. Days of darkness and peril were ahead for Judah, days of distress such as had not been experienced since the revolt of Jeroboam two centuries earlier. The king of Assyria would invade not only Israel but Judah as well. Had Judah turned to the Lord He would have extended His blessings, and not permitted the Assyrians to come against the land. Isaiah earnestly sought to lead the king and his people back to God, but they refused. For this reason Assyria would be allowed to invade the land.

18. Hiss for the fly. Literally, “whistle to the fly” to come from the distant parts of Egypt, that is, summon the armies of Egypt. The period of the Twenty-fourth Dynasty in Egypt was about 750–715. But contemporary with this dynasty was another founded by Piankhi, a powerful chieftain of Nubia, who ultimately extended his sway to southern Egypt (see Vol. II, pp. 52, 53). This Ethiopian Dynasty, the Twenty-fifth, ruled Egypt from about 715 to 663. When Sennacherib came against Judah, evidently on his second invasion of Judah (see Vol. II, p. 64), Taharka (see Vol. II, pp. 53, 64, 65, 160; and see on 2 Kings 18:13; 19:9), the fourth king of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (see Vol. II, pp. 53, 77), threatened the Assyrian advance (see 2 Kings 19:9; Isa. 37:9). Many of the people of Judah probably relied upon Egypt for deliverance from Assyria (2 Kings 18:21). The “Ethiopian” king of Egypt is here called a “fly,” because the fly is a pest and the Egyptians would prove to be a nuisance rather than a help to Judah. Isaiah points out the folly of God’s people in turning to Egypt for help (Isa. 30:1–7; 31:1–3). It was the Lord, not Egypt, who would save Judah from Assyria (chs. 31:4–9; 37:33–36).

The bee. Assyria is compared to a bee. Bees here symbolize a persistent and formidable enemy (Deut. 1:44; Ps. 118:12). The sting of a bee, however painful, is seldom fatal. Assyria would come against Judah as the rod of God’s anger (Isa. 10:5–7), but the nation would not perish.

19. They shall come. The figure of invading insects is continued. The Egyptians and Assyrians would come into the land like flies and bees, and would penetrate all parts of the country.

20. In the same day. That is, at the same time. The prophet gives further details concerning the course of events in Judah.

A razor that is hired. The figure changes. Isaiah had previously likened Judah to a sick man with no sound spot left on his body (ch. 1:5, 6). Now the nation is compared to a man subjected to the supreme indignity of being shaved from head to foot, including even his beard, the loss of which was regarded by Orientals as a great disgrace.

Beyond the river. The Euphrates (see on Joshua 24:2). Assyria would be employed as an instrument in the hands of the Lord to devastate and humble unrepentant Judah. Compare the similar figure employed in Isa. 10:5-7.

21. A young cow. By the Assyrian invasion the land would be largely despoiled. Sennacherib claims to have taken “big and small cattle beyond counting.” By “big cattle” the Assyrians meant cows and oxen, and by “little cattle,” sheep and goats. Although most of the cattle were gone, here and there an individual among the remnant who remained would have managed to save a small cow and perhaps a couple of sheep.

22. The abundance of milk. The remnant left in the land would not, however, be forsaken by the Lord. Heaven’s blessing would rest upon them, and they would have “butter and honey” to eat. Although man might bring a curse, God would bless the faithful remnant. See on v. 15.

23. A thousand silverlings. That is, “pieces of silver,” or shekels (see on Gen. 20:16; cf. S. of Sol. 8:11). A piece of silver for a vine was probably a high price, and these vines must therefore have been of the choicest stock. The meaning here is that the best vineyards would revert to wilderness for lack of care. When the “vineyard” of Israel was cursed it brought forth briers and thorns (Isa. 5:6).

24. With arrows and with bows. These would be carried for protection against wild animals lurking in the once cultivated but now desolate regions of the country. Or, perhaps, men would hunt for game in these regions.

25. That shall be digged. Literally, “that used to be dug up.”

There shall not come. The Hebrew reads “you shall not come.”

Briers and thorns. Once peaceful and productive farmlands would revert to wilderness, because their former owners and caretakers had gone into captivity, never to return to their homeland.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2, 4-7, 9 PK 329

14 DA 578

14, 15 PK 695

15 Ed 231; 2T 397; 8T 250

CHAPTER 8

1 *In Maher-shalal-hash-baz, he prophesieth that Syria and Israel shall be subdued by Assyria. 5 Judah likewise for their infidelity. 9 God’s judgments shall be irresistible. 11 Comfort shall be to them that fear God. 19 Great afflictions to idolaters.*

1. Moreover. Literally, “and,” here equivalent to “then,” or “again.” In Hebrew the *wau*, “and,” connected with the form of the verb *yo’mer*, “said” (literally, “will say”),

here appears to give what is known as the “*wau* consecutive construction” (see Vol. I, p. 27). This links ch. 8 with ch. 7, and makes of it a continuation of that narrative. In other words, ch. 8 is to be considered as a sequel to ch. 7, and therefore an explanation, or clarification, of it. Accordingly, the incident of ch. 8 should therefore be understood as directly related to that of ch. 7. The time of this prophecy is approximately the same time as that of the previous chapter, either late in 735 or early in 734 B.C. (see on ch. >7:1, 16). The prophecy itself is also closely related to that of the preceding chapter, and is to be understood against the background of that chapter.

Roll. Heb. *gillayon*, “tablet.” The same word is translated “glasses,” meaning “mirrors,” in ch. 3:23.

A man’s pen. A literal translation of the Heb. *cheret ’enosh*, an idiomatic expression meaning “a common pen [or stylus],” that is, a pen or stylus in common use.

Maher-shalal-hash-baz. Literally, “speed the spoil, hasten the plunder.” This name, to be recorded on a tablet, was meant to signify the imminence of the Assyrian invasion foretold in ch. 7:17–25. For nearly a year before the birth of the child this name bore its mute, symbolic message to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, giving them ample opportunity to ponder its import. See further on v. 8.

2. Witnesses to record. That is, “to attest” the authenticity, and thereby emphasize the importance of the document. Uriah was the priest later called upon by Ahaz to build a new altar for the Temple according to the pattern of an altar he had seen in Damascus (see on 2 Kings 16:10, 11). The identity of Zechariah is not known.

3. The prophetess. It appears that Isaiah’s wife also had the prophetic gift and assisted him in his ministry. Women who exercised this gift bore the title of “prophetess” (Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chron. 34:22; Luke 2:36). On the other hand, this title may have been accorded her simply because she was the wife of a prophet. Maher-shalal-hash-baz was Isaiah’s second son (see Isa. 7:3). As the first son of Isaiah was a sign to the people that a “remnant” would “return,” the second was to be a sign of speedy judgment to come.

4. My father. By the age of one year a child usually has the ability to say “da da” and “mamma.” Before this child became two years of age the Assyrians would spoil both Israel and Syria. This prophecy was fulfilled in 732, when Pekah and Rezin lost their thrones, and, later, their lives (Isa. 7:16; cf. 2 Kings 15:30; 16:9). Thus the writing of the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz on the tablet was a sign of the speedy coming of the Assyrians to “spoil” Samaria and to “plunder” Syria (see on Isa. 8:1). Israel and Syria thus fell to Assyria. Judah was spared for the time being. God had told Ahaz not to fear (ch. 7:4), and had foretold the birth of the sign child Immanuel by way of assurance that the Lord would be with Judah and spare it the unhappy fate that befell its neighbours to the north.

On one clay tablet Tiglath-pileser declares that the people of Israel overthrew their king, and that he then placed Hoshea upon the throne (see Vol. II, p. 85). According to Kings 15:29, 30, it was in the days of Pekah that Tiglath-pileser conquered “Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria” and that Hoshea slew Pekah and took his throne. And according to 2 Kings 16:7–9 it was when Ahaz called for Assyrian aid that Tiglath-pileser took Damascus, carried its people away captive, and slew Rezin. Instead of relying upon God for help, Ahaz had asked Tiglath-

pileser to save him out of the hands of the kings of Israel and Syria (2 Kings 16:7). But in doing this, Ahaz was only inviting judgments upon Judah. The chronicler declares that by his transgressions Ahaz made Judah “naked,” and that although Tiglath-pileser came, he “distressed him, but strengthened him not” (2 Chron. 28:19, 20).

6. *The waters of Shiloah.* This aqueduct flowed from the spring Gihon, in a cave in the eastern hill of Jerusalem, whose waters formed a stream that emptied into the old Pool of Siloam. Later, a tunnel built by Hezekiah (in which the Siloam inscription was found; see Vol. II, opposite p. 65; p. 87) conducted the waters of Gihon to a new Pool of Siloam inside the city. These quiet waters of Shiloah represented the message of assurance against Assyria that was implicit in the name Immanuel, “God with us.” To refuse the gently flowing waters of Shiloah was to refuse the counsel of God. By turning to Assyria for help, Ahaz brought upon Judah “the waters of the river [Euphrates], strong and many,” for “the river,” “the king of Assyria,” would “go over all his banks” and inundate “the breadth of *thy* land [Judah]” (vs. 7, 8). All this was implicit in the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz, “Speed the spoil, hasten the plunder” (see on v. 1).

Rejoice in Rezin. The meaning of the remainder of v. 6 is obscure in relation to its context. Ahaz and the people of Judah were in mortal fear of Rezin and Pekah, son of Remaliah (ch. 7:1, 2). On the basis of a correction of the Hebrew text some have translated the last clause, “melt in fear before Rezin and the son of Remaliah” (RSV; etc.). While this reading agrees with the context, it also involves a somewhat improbable reconstruction of the Hebrew. Others, supposing the clause to be an early editorial insertion, have suggested that if it be omitted, v. 7 would follow v. 6 naturally and without any break in the line of thought. It is worthy of note, however, that the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs confirms the reading of the Masoretic text.

7. *The waters of the river.* Assyria is here referred to under the symbol of the Euphrates River (see on Joshua 24:2; cf. Jer. 47:2), and the future Assyrian invasions of Judah are described under the figure of a river overflowing its banks and inundating the adjacent countryside. These waters would first engulf the nation of Israel, and later “overflow” (Isa. 7:8) into Judah. The Assyrians often spoke of their armies as overwhelming nations like a flood.

8. *Pass through Judah.* Because of its disobedience and unbelief, the land of Judah would not remain entirely free from Assyrian attack. Israel would utterly perish, but Judah would not be completely overwhelmed. Small at first, the flood would increase in size until the waters reached “to the neck” (see ch. 30:28) of Judah. History records that eventually all of Judah except the city of Jerusalem fell temporarily into Assyrian hands (see on 2 Kings 18:13).

The stretching out of his wings. Rather, “of its wings,” in reference to the spreading flood waters of the river flowing over its banks on either side. To be sure, the river itself represented the king of Assyria (v. 7).

Fill the breadth. See the foregoing.

Immanuel. For this name see on ch. 7:14. Mention of the name Immanuel is a reminder that Israel might have had God with them (see on ch. 7:14). They completely forfeited God’s presence, and Judah nearly so. Many of the leaders and people of Judah had forsaken the Lord, and as a result His presence could not be with them. But others, a small remnant, were faithful, and they would be saved. It was primarily for their benefit that this message was given.

9. Associate yourselves. Heb. *ro‘u*, from *ra‘a‘*, which may mean either “to be bad,” “to be displeased,” or “to break.” Accordingly, *ro‘u* would mean either “be displeased” or “be broken.” The translators of the Latin Vulgate probably took the vowelless Hebrew text (see Vol. I, pp. 27, 34, 35) of the word *ro‘u* to be from the root *ra‘ah*, “to have dealings with [one another],” and accordingly translated *ro‘u* as *congregamini*, “assemble [yourselves],” or “associate [yourselves].” The KJV translation follows this possible reading of the Latin Vulgate. The translators of the LXX seem to have had before them a Hebrew text that read *de‘u* instead of *ro‘u*, and rendered *de‘u* into Greek as *gnōte*, “know.” In Hebrew the letters *r* and *d* are almost identical in appearance, and the one may easily be mistaken for the other (see p. 14; for examples, see on Gen. 10:4; 25:15; Joshua 9:4; 1 Sam. 12:11; 2 Sam. 8:12; 23:30). *De‘u* is from the root *yada‘*, “to know,” and the form *de‘u* would be translated “know ye.” *De‘u* provides a reading more in harmony with the context, and might be rendered into English as “take knowledge,” or “know ye.” In the Hebrew, Isa. 8:9 appears in poetic form, and the translation “know ye” would then stand parallel to the words “give ear” (see Vol. III, pp. 24–27).

Ye people. Literally, “ye peoples,” meaning “ye nations.” Isaiah here speaks to the heathen nations that would think to “take counsel together” (v. 10) against God, and warns them that “God is with us.” In the poetic form of v. 9, “ye people” stands parallel to “ye of far countries.”

10. Take counsel together. God is able to bring to nought all the counsels of evil men who set themselves to thwart His purpose. He did this in the days of Ahaz, and He is doing so today.

God is with us. Heb. *‘Immanu ‘El*, the same words transliterated in v. 8 as Immanuel. Verses 9 and 10 make clear the significance of the Immanuel message God was endeavoring to impress upon the hearts of His people. In the end, the counsels of the Assyrians would not prevail against the people of God because of the fact that He was “with” them (see ch. 10:5–12). Isaiah earnestly preached this Immanuel message to the people of Judah, and there were no doubt many who learned to place their confidence in God. King Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, was one of these. When Sennacherib came against Judah, Hezekiah encouraged his people with these inspiring words: “Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles” (2 Chron. 32:7, 8). Because Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, God was with him, and eventually 185,000 of Sennacherib’s host were slain in a single night by the angel of the Lord (2 Kings 19:35).

11. The way of this people. Isaiah was not to yield to the popular trend away from God. God made this command emphatic: “with a strong hand.” Thus Isaiah need not be in doubt as to the right course of action.

12. Say ye not. Although God is speaking to Isaiah personally, He addresses “this people” (v. 11). In the Hebrew, “ye” is plural, and God continues speaking to the people through v. 15. In v. 16 He again addresses Isaiah personally.

A confederacy. Heb. *qesher*, “conspiracy,” as the word is rendered in more than half the instances where it occurs (2 Sam. 15:12; 2 Kings 15:15, 30; Eze. 22:25; etc.). In 2

Chron. 23:13 and elsewhere it is translated “treason.” Only in Isa. 8:12 is it rendered “confederacy.” In this sense it denotes a “confederacy” formed for the purpose of conspiring against someone. Today the word “confederacy” is generally used in the favorable sense of “alliance,” though it still means also “a combination of persons for unlawful purposes,” a usage more general when the KJV was translated. It is in this latter sense that the word is here used. Syria and Israel had conspired together, or were “confederate,” against Judah (ch. 7:2, 5, 6), and Ahaz, on his part, had formed an alliance with Assyria against Israel and Syria (2 Kings 16:7–9). Ahaz and the people of Judah feared the Israelite-Syrian conspiracy, or confederacy, and had united with the heathen in an effort to counteract it. It was because he trusted in the heathen for help rather than trusting God, that Ahaz was rebuked by the Lord. It was a reproach to the God of heaven for His professed people to enter into a “confederacy” with idolaters. God would have His people stand by themselves, distinct from the world. We are to counsel with God and to find our strength in Him. Only thus can we have the presence of the Lord with us; only thus can we accomplish His work in His way. When the people of God form alliances of any kind with those who know Him not, then the policies of men will inevitably supplant the principles of Heaven, and the work of the Lord will suffer. Our strength lies, not in close association with the world, but in a complete separation from it.

13. Sanctify the Lord of hosts. Rather, “Regard the Lord of hosts as holy.” Isaiah had caught a vision of the holiness of God (ch. 6:1–4), and now he called upon the people of Judah to recognize the holiness of the Lord. Unless the people caught a vision of the infinite holiness of God, they could never attain to holiness themselves.

Let him be your fear. See on Deut. 4:10; 6:2. A people who feared God would not need to stand in fear of man. Ahaz was afraid of Pekah and Rezin because he refused to fear the Lord. The fear of God, however, is something far different from the fear of man. To fear the Lord does not mean to be afraid of Him, but to stand in awe of Him, to trust and love Him, to come into His presence with joy.

14. For a sanctuary. Heb. *miqdash*, “sacred place,” “sanctuary.” Those who duly feared the Lord (see on v. 13) would find in Him a refuge from danger (see on Ps. 91:1). Isaiah sought to turn the people away from earthly things to God. Christ was, and is today, the true “sanctuary” of Israel.

A stone of stumbling. Jesus referred to Himself as the Rock (Matt. 21:42–44). Paul quoted Isa. 8:14 with reference to Christ (Rom. 9:33), and Peter gave an even more detailed application of it (1 Peter 2:6–8). During the erection of Solomon’s Temple no place could be found for a certain huge stone cut at the quarry and transported to the site of the Temple. For a long time it lay in the way of the builders, unused and rejected. Eventually, however, it was discovered that this was the most important stone of the entire structure, the cornerstone, and it was finally placed in its vital position (see DA 597, 598). Jesus is the long-rejected Cornerstone of Judaism.

To those who did not know Christ, He was a stone of stumbling and offense. He was constantly in their way, keeping them from carrying out their own selfish plans, preventing them from accomplishing their wicked designs. The very Stone over which they stumbled was none other than the Cornerstone of heaven itself, the One without whom all life, joy, and peace for this world and the universe are impossible.

Both the houses of Israel. This phrase makes it evident that Isaiah addresses himself not only to Judah but also to Israel. Both Israel and Judah had turned against the Lord and

His law, finding Him an offense rather than the sanctuary of life and hope that He promised to be.

For a snare. The figure of the stone is exchanged for that of a trap, to bring out another aspect of the problem. Christ and His message would be as a trap, or a snare, to the wicked inhabitants of Jerusalem. He who should be the life, hope, and protection of all mankind would prove to be a snare to those who refused to walk in His ways. Only thus, however, can life be preserved on earth. If the wicked were allowed to walk unrestrained in their evil ways, they would very soon destroy themselves and all the inhabitants of earth. It is only by calling a halt to the operations of the wicked and placing certain restraints upon them beyond which they are not permitted to go, that the continuation of life is made possible on earth. Every man who lives can thank God that He is as a gin and a snare to the wicked, for otherwise there would be no peace or joy, no freedom or hope, for any of the inhabitants of earth.

15. Stumble, and fall. The Lord here refers primarily to the people of Isaiah's own time. But those in all ages who walk contrary to God and His law will, when they refuse the reproofs of God's Holy Word, also "stumble, and fall." Those who, because of their lack of spiritual discernment, fail to understand the true import of the messages of God's Word, often cause those messages to become a means of stumbling to those who come under their influence. No man need be ensnared if he has spiritual insight and a love of truth.

16. Bind up the testimony. This was to be Isaiah's task. These words refer to the ancient custom of binding up a document and affixing a seal to it. Some of the Jewish Aramaic papyri of the 5th century B.C., discovered at Elephantine, in Egypt, were found still tied with string and the knot sealed with clay stamped with the impression of a carved seal (see Vol. III, opp. p. 80). Thus the contents of the document would be authenticated and kept inviolate. Thus it is to be with the words of God and the law of God. Isaiah had delivered a message of vital importance to the people, God's message of life to the nation. That message must be diligently preserved. God had given Israel His holy law, and obedience to that law meant life to all mankind. It was of vital importance that the law be kept inviolate through all ages, that not one jot or tittle might be altered or otherwise made ineffective (see on Matt. 5:17, 18).

17. I will wait. Isaiah is again the speaker. This is his personal response to God's message in vs. 12–16. Whatever others may do, the prophet affirms his purpose to obey God and to find in Him confidence and strength.

Hide his face. God never arbitrarily hides His face from any man or nation. It is when men turn their backs upon God that He turns His face from them (see ch. 59:1, 2). God does not forever continue to speak to those who will not hear. It was because Israel had turned away from hearing the Word of the Lord and from obeying His law that, as it were, He "hid" His face from them. The experience of the nation as a whole was now similar to that of Saul when the Lord would no longer answer him (1 Sam. 28:6).

I will look. Whatever the experience of others might be, Isaiah would look to God, give ear to His words, and walk in His ways (see Joshua 24:15).

18. I and the children. As indicated by their names (see on ch. 7:14), Isaiah and his sons were ordained of God to be living signs to the people of Judah. Through them God proclaimed a vital message to His people. The name "Isaiah" means "Jehovah [will] save." Isaiah's name is, in fact, the theme of the book that bears his name (see p. 84). In

relation to the immediate circumstances, this meant salvation from Israel, Syria, and Assyria. The name of Isaiah's first son, Shear-jashub, means "[a] remnant [shall] return," and that child by his very name signified to the people that a remnant would be saved. God would not at this time make a full end of Judah, as He planned to do of Israel. The name of Isaiah's second son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, means "Speed the spoil, hasten the prey." This son was a constant reminder that judgment was hastening on apace and that ere long doom would fall on those who rejected God's grace. To those who were faithful and true to Him, the child Immanuel was God's assurance of His continued presence among them.

19. When they shall say. Isaiah here denounces the sources upon which Ahaz and many in Judah were relying for counsel and guidance.

Familiar spirits. See on Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:11. By their iniquities the children of Israel had cut themselves off from God, even as Saul had done, so that the Lord no longer answered them (see on 1 Sam. 28:6). And like Saul, the people now turned to demons for guidance and help. Spiritualism was prevalent then, as it is today, with the result that the people sought the spirits for guidance.

Peep. Heb. *saphaph*, commonly meaning "to chirp," "to whisper" (see on Lev. 19:31). The mediums spoke in a lisping whisper. There is something of ridicule and contempt in these words. The emissaries of the devil often resorted to the most senseless and degrading devices in making contacts with the spirits. By consulting the spirits of devils, men would inevitably become like them in character and actions. Satan exercises practically unlimited influence over those who forsake the "law" and the "testimony" (Isa. 8:20) in preference for the more pleasing messages of his evil spirits.

Seek unto their God. The alternative to seeking the spirit mediums for counsel. It was the height of folly for Israel to forsake God, the Author of life, and give themselves over to the author of misery and death.

For the living to the dead. Literally, "on behalf of the living [should they consult] to the dead?" Since "the dead know not any thing" (Eccl. 9:5), it is obvious that they cannot be consulted, and that any pretense at doing so is trickery. Man is capable of no higher folly than forsaking the living God and putting himself under the influence of the author of death. Those who refuse truth because it is not pleasing to them are defenseless against the devil's lies (see 2 Thess. 2:10, 11).

20. The law. Heb. *torah*, denoting all the revealed will of God. This is the common Biblical term for the inspired writings of Scripture, particularly those of Moses (see on Num. 19:14; Deut. 4:44; 30:10; 31:9; Prov. 3:1; see Vol. I, pp. 37, 38). Isaiah directs men away from the words and wisdom of devils and men to the revealed wisdom of God. The prophets of God were His witnesses, or spokesmen, and the "testimony" they bore was His message of wisdom and life. Isaiah here directs men to the Word of God as the standard of truth and the guide to right living. God has revealed Himself in His Word. Whatever men may speak that is not in harmony with that Word has "no light" in it (see on ch. 50:10, 11).

21. Hardly bestead and hungry. Literally, "hard pressed and hungry," or "greatly distressed and hungry" (RSV). Isaiah here refers to those who have rejected God and the light of His Word, in particular to those who rejected the prophetic message of chs. 7; 8. All such walk as it were through a land of darkness, in perplexity and distress, longing for something, they know not what, looking for something they can never find—apart from

God. In gloom, bewilderment, without either light or hope, and angry at their plight, they blame their human leaders for the trouble in which they find themselves, and curse God because they must now reap the bitter results of disobedience. The prophet here aptly describes the experience of willful men of all ages. In ch. 9:1–8 his inspired vision glances briefly forward to the time of the first advent of Christ, the Light who would dispel the darkness of men’s souls by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2; see on Matt. 1:23).

22. They shall look. These men gaze heavenward without perceiving either God or light. Then they look earthward, and there find only anguish of soul and perplexity. Without God the world is a bewildering maze of uncertainty and distress. The Messiah, to whom the prophet looks longingly forward in ch. 9:1–7, is man’s only light in the darkness of today, and his only hope for a brighter tomorrow.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 9 Ev 617
- 10 PK 330
- 10–13Ev 618
- 11, 12 Ev 26
- 11–13LS 322; TM 463; 6T 17
- 11–207T 153
- 12 CE 31; LS 321; 8T 42, 160, 161
- 12, 13 FE 484
- 13 8T 38, 103
- 13, 14 PK 330
- 13–15DA 598
- 14, 15 5T 691
- 15 FE 284
- 16 GC 452; 6T 332
- 18 AH 159, 536; COL 196; Te 270; 1T 547; CG 561, 565; 2T 366
- 19 EW 59; PP 684; 5T 193
- 19, 20 GC 559; PP 687; SR 397
- 20 CH 459; Ev 260; GC vii, 593, 452; GW 301, 309; LS 322; MB 145; TM 30, 110, 119, 463, 503; 5T 199, 301, 575, 625, 691; 8T 299
- 22 PK 373, 681

CHAPTER 9

- 1 *What joy shall be in the midst of afflictions, by the kingdom and birth of Christ.* 8 *The judgments upon Israel for their pride, 13 for their hypocrisy, 18 and for their impenitency.*

1. The dimness. In Hebrew Bibles ch. 9:1 is ch. 8:23. Verses 1–7 of 9 are closely related to the closing verses of ch. 8, which present a picture of extreme misery and darkness. In Isaiah’s day the armies of Assyria brought misery and “darkness” (ch. 9:2) to Zebulun and Naphtali, two of the northernmost tribes of Israel. In the realization that this experience came as the result of spiritual darkness, Isaiah, with prophetic eye, looks forward to the “great light” (vs. 2, 6, 7), which will dispel the darkness of men’s souls (John 1:4–9; 8:12; 9:5). The same regions that once saw so much distress will see a revelation of glory and light. The picture is one of the coming of the world’s Messiah

with His message of life and hope. Over a world shrouded in darkness (see DA 34, 35) the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2).

Zebulun. At the time Isaiah wrote these words the land of Israel was in great distress, particularly the border regions to the north and east, for Tiglath-pileser III had invaded the country and had taken “Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria” (2 Kings 15:29).

More grievously afflict. Literally, “cause to be [made, or, considered] more weighty,” that is, here probably, to be given greater consideration and thus to be honored or to be made glorious. The parallel of v. 2 between “darkness” and “light” seems to require a contrast in v. 1 between affliction and honor.

The way of the sea. In ancient times highways were given descriptive names (see Num. 21:22; Deut. 1:2; see on Num. 20:17; Deut. 2:27). Some identify the “way of the sea” with the famous caravan route that led from Damascus and the regions beyond the Jordan, across Galilee, to the Mediterranean Sea (see on Mark 2:14). Others identify “the way of the sea” with the coast road northward to Tyre and Sidon.

Galilee of the nations. The Kedesh mentioned in 2 Kings 15:29 was in Galilee, and was a city of refuge (Joshua 20:7; 21:32). In the days of Solomon the district of Galilee extended to the region of Tyre (1 Kings 9:11). The name “Galilee” means “circle” or “circuit.” In NT times Galilee included a somewhat larger area than formerly. It was called “Galilee of the nations” because it was always inhabited by a mixed populace, only a small portion of whom were Jews. This region, however, was linked to the world by means of roads leading to Damascus, the Euphrates, and Mesopotamia, to Tyre, Asia Minor, and Europe in the north, and to Samaria, Judea, and Egypt in the south. It was in such a region, readily accessible to the world, that Jesus spent much of His time in ministry to mankind.

2. A great light. To the people of Galilee, who lived in such impenetrable darkness, great light was suddenly to shine forth (see John 1:4–9). The mind of the prophet was carried forward to the coming of the world’s Messiah. These words met their fulfillment at the beginning of Christ’s public ministry in Galilee (see on Matt. 4:12–16). From the time of the captivity of the ten tribes in 723/722, Galilee was literally in darkness—subject to foreign powers and without the ministry of either priest or prophet—until the coming of Messiah.

3. Not increased the joy. Twenty Hebrew manuscripts, together with the Hebrew marginal reading, the Syriac, and the Targums, read *lo* instead of *lo’*, “to it” instead of “not,” which seems more appropriate to the context. The prophet presents a picture of a brighter and happier day, when Messiah has come to His people, bringing them peace and joy. They are increased in numbers (see Isa. 26:15; Eze. 36:10, 11), and their happiness is multiplied.

Joy in harvest. That is, joy like that of workers in the harvest season—in agricultural lands the happiest time of the year. In the autumn the Hebrews had their Feast of Tabernacles, a season of great gladness and thanksgiving (see Neh. 8:17). Their rejoicing was because they knew that God was with them (Phil. 3:1; 4:4). Christ came to proclaim peace and gladness to men (Isa. 61:3; Luke 2:13, 14).

4. Broken the yoke. Christ came to break the bonds of sin and to relieve men of the pressing burden of guilt and care that rested so heavily upon them (Isa. 61:1, 2; see on Luke 4:18, 19; Matt. 11:28–30).

The day of Midian. During the days of the judges Israel was frequently under the heavy hand of an oppressor, but eventually liberated by a national hero (see Vol. II, pp. 45–50). Gideon achieved a glorious victory over an overwhelming host, broke the power of the Midianites, and set his people free (Judges 7:19–25).

5. Every battle. The picture is one of strife and bloodshed, of tumult, turmoil, and death, but of eventual victory and the burning of the debris of battle. The age-long struggle between the forces of right and wrong reaches a climax in the great battle of Armageddon, the prelude to Messiah's eternal reign (Rev. 16:14, 16; 19:11–19; see also Ps. 46:6–9; 76:2, 3; Isa. 63:1–6; Eze. 38:21, 22; 39:9; Joel 3:11, 16; Zech. 9:9, 10; Zech. 14:13).

6. Unto us a child. Isaiah concludes his picture of the coming era of peace with a striking prophecy of the great Prince of Peace. Peace is never to be realized in this world by the efforts of men. In his description of earth's coming King, who will reign in righteousness and holiness, Isaiah employs terms that cannot belong to any earthly ruler.

There is, patently, but one Person in the universe to whom the description here given can fully and adequately apply, and that is Christ. Nowhere else in the Bible do we find the loftiness of thought, the beauty of expression, the intensity of feeling, found here in the description of the world's Saviour and coming King. Truly, Isaiah had seen a vision of the Lord of glory when these words were written. The hand of God was upon him and an angel guided his pen, as with other OT writers. In Ps. 110 Christ is set forth as the coming King, who will be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"; in Ps. 2 He is pictured as breaking the nations with a rod of iron; and in Ps. 45 He is described as riding forth in majesty.

The government. Christ will rule over all heaven and earth (see Dan. 2:44, 45; Matt. 25:31; 28:18; Luke 1:32, 33; 1 Cor. 15:25, cf. Ps. 110:1; Phil. 2:10; Rev. 11:15).

Wonderful, Counsellor. That is, "wonderful Counsellor" (see chs. 11:2, 3; 25:1; 28:29). This name embodies the thought of wisdom, kindness, and consideration—a name that would call forth the rapture, adoration, and praise of all beings in heaven and earth, and in all the universe (see Phil. 2:9–11; Rev. 5:12, 13).

Mighty God. Jesus the Son is no less God than is the Father. He was one with the Father from the days of eternity (see Ps. 90:2; Prov. 8:22–30; Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 14:9, 11; DA 19).

Everlasting Father. As God the Father is eternal, so also is Christ. Isaiah calls Him the Father because He is Father to all mankind in a special sense, being the Creator of men and of the world (John 1:3; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; cf. Gen. 1:26). No other word than "Father" so fully expresses the love and care of Jesus toward His children. When Christ rules, it will be as a father to His people (Isa. 22:21, 22; cf. Rev. 3:7).

Prince of Peace. See Zech. 9:9, 10; Eph. 2:14. Peace comes only with righteousness (Isa. 32:17, 18), and Jesus is the righteous King (Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15, 16), imputing and imparting His own righteousness to men. He came to the world to bring peace (Luke 2:14; John 14:27; see also Phil. 4:7).

7. His government. Daniel foretells that the kingdom of Christ will break in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth "and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44; cf. Rev. 11:15). The angel Gabriel declared that "of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33).

The throne of David. David was a type of Christ, and it is through Christ that the throne of David will be established forever (Gen. 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:11–13; Ps. 89:3, 4, 29, 36; 132:11, 12; Jer. 23:5; 33:17; Luke 1:32; see on Deut. 18:15; 1 Chron. 28:7; >Matt. 1:1).

With judgment and with justice. Literally, “with justice and with righteousness” (see chs. 11:4, 5; 16:5).

The zeal. Why will the Lord do all this? He is moved by holy and ardent zeal, prompted by a spirit of love. His is a love that cannot remain inactive, which, when He thinks of men lost in sin, prompts Him to works of grace and glory. There is no stronger power than love, nothing that can move a man to greater sacrifice or more valiant service. The all-embracing love of Christ moves Him to rule with a spirit of unselfish service, “with justice and with righteousness.”

8. Into Jacob. As the context (vs. 9–17) makes clear, the following message was “against Jacob” in the sense that it presaged divine judgment. This verse begins a new section, extending through ch. 10:4, in which the Lord administers a rebuke to the nation of Israel. The vision of the King who will reign in glory has ended, and the prophet turns his attention to the problems of the immediate situation. The time is the same as that of the previous chapters, for Rezin of Syria is still alive (v. 11), and the message must therefore have been delivered between 735 and 732, when Rezin died.

Upon Israel. Both Jacob and Israel are mentioned in v. 8. The message of chs. 9:8 to 10:4 is primarily directed against the rebellious ten tribes, usually addressed as Ephraim or Samaria (ch. 9:9, 21). But in v. 14 the term “Israel” almost certainly refers to the northern nation. Does Israel in v. 8 refer to the northern nation, Israel, and Jacob, to Judah? If so, the meaning is that the Lord sent this message through Judah to Israel. However, in a more general sense Isaiah often uses the terms Jacob and Israel for all God’s chosen people (see chs. 10:20–22; 27:6; 29:23; 40:27; 41:8, 14; 43:1, 22, 28; 44:5; 46:3; 48:1, 12; 49:6). After the final fall of the northern kingdom both terms generally refer to Judah.

9. Ephraim. The Lord had given assurance that Ephraim and Syria would not succeed in their plans against Judah (ch. 7:4–7). They had already experienced some reverses, but Pekah, of Israel, was still determined to continue his attack on Judah.

Stoutness of heart. In perverse arrogance Pekah refused to accept the warnings delivered by Isaiah, determined rather to carry out his measures against Ahaz.

10. We will build. Isaiah here refers to the failure of earlier efforts by Pekah and to his plans to recoup past losses (see ch. 7:1). It is as if buildings of brick had been demolished, but Pekah would build again, this time with stone instead of brick; the “sycomores” (see on Luke 17:6; 19:4), having been cut down, Pekah would replace them with the more expensive and durable cedars (see 1 Kings 10:27). He was displaying his perversity and open defiance of the will of Heaven.

11. The adversaries. The Lord would send the Assyrians, the enemies of Rezin, against Israel. See 2 Kings 15:29 for an account of Tiglath-pileser’s measures against Pekah.

12. The Syrians. At this time Syria was allied with Ephraim against Judah (ch. 7:1, 2), but the Lord promised to turn the Syrians against Israel, their traditional enemy. Alliances between nations in the Orient were ephemeral, and an ally of one day might become a bitter enemy the next. The Syrians would attack Israel from the north and east,

and the Philistines would come against them from the south and west. The Hebrews gave directions from the viewpoint of a man facing the east (see on Gen. 29:1; Ex. 3:1; Num. 3:23). Thus the Syrians were “before” and the Philistines were “behind.”

Stretched out still. Compare Ex. 7:19; 8:5; etc.; Isa. 5:25, where the same expression is used in connection with other judgments. The Lord had smitten Israel with judgments, but His hand was stretched out as if in the act of bringing further judgments upon the nation. Tiglath-pileser III took large sections of Israel, but did not destroy it; the siege of Shalmaneser V, still future, was to bring the nation to its final end.

13. Turneth not. God had sent His judgments, not to destroy, but to bring the people to repentance. They failed, however, to accept His messages of reproof, and continued in their wickedness and perversity; therefore additional, and more severe, judgments would inevitably follow.

Smiteth. Compare on ch. 1:5, 6.

14. Cut off from Israel. Because Israel failed to repent, the Lord had no recourse but to send further judgments, which would cut off from them both “head and tail” (see on v. 13). The nation would be utterly destroyed, with the judgments falling particularly upon those who had led the nation astray (see v. 16).

Branch and rush. The “branch” was probably that of the stately palm, answering to the nobles and rulers of the land. The “rush,” or reed, may refer to an affected lowliness (ch. 58:5), or, according to ch. 9:14, 15, to the false prophets.

15. The ancient. See ch. 3:2, 3. Princes, judges, civil officials, and military officers were among the outstanding leaders of the nation. Upon this class the coming judgment would be particularly severe.

That teacheth lies. The most contemptible class in the nation was that group of men who had the responsibility of providing spiritual leadership but led the people in ways of error and folly. Isaiah did not spare them in his messages of rebuke (chs. 28:7; 29:9, 10).

16. Cause them to err. Nations must have leaders, but leaders sometimes lead in the wrong direction. Many a nation has been doomed because its leaders have led their people astray. He who aspires to lead should consider seriously the heavy responsibilities of leadership. The fate of a nation depends upon the counsel he gives and the example he sets. Israel failed because its leaders led the people astray.

17. Have no joy in. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “not have pity,” which seems to be more nearly in harmony with the context.

An hypocrite. See on Matt. 6:2; 7:5; 23:3, 13. When Israel fell, the people had given themselves over wholly to evil. They still made a profession of religion, but openly rejoiced in iniquity. All classes were involved, and all classes would suffer, from young to old. When iniquity reached such a pass, justice demanded that judgments should fall.

18. Burneth as the fire. This is a striking description of the final effects of iniquity. Sin kills, but it does not heal. Wickedness burns and creates ashes and desolation, but it does not repair or build. Briers and thorns, fit only for destruction, symbolize the iniquity that prevailed among the people (see chs. 5:6; 7:23–25; 10:17; 27:4; 32:13). When the land became covered with a rank growth of brambles and briers that crowded out the good trees of the forest, then wickedness would break forth as a fire to consume itself. Sin would be punished; it would, in fact, bring about its own destruction (see Isa. 33:11, 12; Jer. 21:14; Joel 1:19, 20; Heb. 6:8). Thus the land would be left clear, ready for a new growth of wholesome verdure (see 2 Peter 3:10–13).

19. The land darkened. See on vs. 1, 2. The prophet views a scene of chaos and confusion. Men are utterly bewildered, and the country is filled with darkness. Passion and bitterness, hatred and vice, injustice and cruelty, have so torn the hearts of men and have so inflamed their spirits that every man is set against his neighbor. Such will be the ultimate effect of evil when “every man’s sword shall be against his brother” (Eze. 38:21) and when the hand of every man “shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour” (Zech. 14:13).

20. Flesh of his own arm. A striking picture of the ultimate effects of greed and corruption. Selfishness at length consumes itself. He who is not interested in his neighbor’s welfare is actually working against his own best interests. No man can, in the long run, be perfectly happy and prosperous unless his neighbor is also happy. When one man builds himself up by oppressing his neighbor he prepares the way for his own destruction. When nations destroy one another in order to further their own selfish interests they are engaging in the greatest possible folly, for they are thus destroying themselves and the world in which they live. As in the past, man has destroyed man, and nation has destroyed nation, by discord and greed, so the world today is in the process of working out its own destruction.

21. Manasseh, Ephraim. These two tribes were brethren and had common interests. But when Ephraim was arrayed against Manasseh and Manasseh against Ephraim, the common destruction of both was certain. And when these two tribes arrayed themselves against their brother Judah, they were making certain the fact that their final day of doom had come. No nation can pass through such a welter of crime, lust, and blood, as was the case with the northern kingdom during the early lifetime of Isaiah, and long endure.

Stretched out still. A further list of crimes for which the Lord’s hand continued to be stretched out in judgment is given in the following chapter, which continues the line of thought without a break.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 PK 373

2 CT 469; DA 56; PK 688; 8T 306

5 GC 37, 642, 672

6 DA 25, 56, 363, 578; Ed 73; GC 46; MB 27; PP 34, 755; TM 222; 5T 729

6, 7 8T 145; PK 688

12, 17, 21 6T 304; 7T 265

CHAPTER 10

1 *The woe of tyrants. 5 Assyria, the rod of hypocrites, for his pride shall be broken. 20 A remnant of Israel shall be saved. 24 Israel is comforted with promise of deliverance from Assyria.*

1. Unrighteous decrees. The evil here denounced is one of which Israel and Judah were both guilty. It is the evil already denounced in Judah in chs. 1:23 and 5:23. The crime was one of injustice against the poor and needy, against widows and orphans, against the unfortunate and the oppressed. Men were thinking only of themselves and of their own interests. The weakness of the age was selfishness and greed, an evil that was gnawing at the very heart of the nation.

3. The day of visitation. Instead of pronouncing judgment against the oppressors of the poor, the Lord, in asking this question, calls upon them to pronounce judgment against themselves. These unjust judges knew enough about justice and equity to know

that they were guilty and that in the day of divine visitation there would be no way of escape for them. Isaiah had earlier pointed out how in the day of the Lord the wicked would flee to the rocks and caves to hide from the glory of God “when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth” (ch. 2:19).

4. *The prisoners.* The Hebrew of the first part of v. 4 is not clear. However, the thought is that the unjust judges of vs. 1–3 will, in the day of the Lord’s visitation, find themselves among the prisoners, crouching down with them in terror before the Judge of the universe, and that they will meet the same doom—they will be numbered among the slain.

5. *Rod of mine anger.* Having enumerated the crimes for which His professed people were to be judged, the Lord now sets forth the means by which He will execute judgment against them. God has decreed the sentence, and Assyria is to be the means by which the sentence will be executed. Compare ch. 7:20, where Assyria is compared to a razor that has been hired.

6. *An hypocritical nation.* That is, Judah, for by this time Samaria has been subdued (v. 11).

Spoil ... prey. Compare the name of Isaiah’s son Maher-shalal-hash-baz (ch. 8:3), which means “speed the spoil, hasten the prey.” The Lord had commissioned Assyria to execute judgment against Israel and Damascus (ch. 8:4) as well as against Judah.

7. *He meaneth not so.* This is an interesting revelation of the way the Lord works with nations. When certain powers needed to have judgment meted out against them, the Lord used Assyria as His rod for punishment. Assyria, however, had no idea that it was being used as a tool in the hands of the Lord. So far as Assyrian leaders were aware, their policies were determined entirely by their own selfish interests. In other words, it was not the Spirit of the Lord that influenced Assyria to go against Israel and Judah, but the spirit of the evil one. How, then, can it be said that Assyria was a tool in the hand of the Lord? God’s protecting hand was withdrawn from the power against whom judgment had been decreed, and Assyria was permitted to work out her selfish, evil will. It is thus that the Lord works out His sovereign will in a world that is in rebellion against Him. The purposes of men and demons are overruled to carry out the purposes of God (see on 2 Chron. 18:18; 22:8; Dan. 4:17).

8. *My princes.* The lords of Assyria were comparable in power and glory to the kings of other nations, so the Assyrians boasted. So great was their power and so glorious their majesty that the monarchs of neighboring nations were as nought before them. The rulers of Assyria were fond of giving long lists of vassal kings who paid tribute and did homage to them.

9. *Calno as Carchemish.* Calno (Calneh), the Assyrian *Kullani*, was a city taken by Assyria in 738. King Pisiris of Carchemish paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser at Arpad in 743. Carchemish was on the bend of the Euphrates, about 382 mi. (c. 615 km.) north-northwest of Jerusalem, and *Kullani*, about 47 mi. (75 km.) southwest of Carchemish.

Hamath as Arpad. Nineteen districts of Hamath were brought under Assyrian power in 743 or soon thereafter. Arpad played a leading role in the Assyrian campaigns of 743, 742, 741, and 740. Arpad was a few miles from *Kullani*, and Hamath on the Orontes was 118 mi. (190 km.) north by east from Damascus. Damascus was about 100 mi. (c. 160 km.) northeast of Samaria.

Samaria as Damascus. Tiglath-pileser's campaigns of 733 and 732 were against Damascus, and in 727 there was still another campaign against that city. Samaria was besieged by Shalmaneser V and taken in 723/722 (see Vol. II, pp. 85, 160), and its citizens were then carried captive to Assyria. Most of the northern and eastern parts of the kingdom of Israel had, however, already been reduced by Tiglath-pileser by 732, some years before Samaria itself was forced to bow to Assyrian might.

10. The kingdoms. Assyria had dealt successfully with the important cities named in v. 9. Their gods had been powerless to protect them against Assyrian might. Assyria regarded her gods as supreme over all others, and believed that her extensive conquests confirmed this. To the Assyrian king, as to all ancient peoples, the greatness of a god was measured by the power of the nation that worshiped that god. The "gods" of Jerusalem and Samaria were thus regarded as inferior to those of many of the nations already conquered by Assyria.

11. Samaria and her idols. The Assyrians thought of the gods of other nations as being similar to their own gods. To them the God of Jerusalem was basically no different from the god of any other city. As the gods of Samaria had failed to save it, so the God of Jerusalem would not be able to save it from Assyrian might.

12. His whole work. God had a task to accomplish, one of bringing judgment upon Zion and Jerusalem. Assyria was to be the tool God used to perform that task. But when the work was done the Lord would, in turn, punish Assyria for its pride and arrogance.

I will punish. Literally, "I will call to account." Note the change from the third person in the first part of the verse to the first person here, probably for emphasis.

13. My hand. Compare Dan. 4:30. The analysis of Assyrian policy as set forth in Isa. 10:13 justifies God's judgment upon that nation. At first glance it might appear that the Lord was unjust in using Assyria for the performance of a task and then punishing her for doing what He wanted done (see on Ex. 4:21; 9:16). So the reason is here clearly set forth. Assyria is thinking only of herself, not of God (see on Isa. 10:7). She is interested solely in plunder and conquest. When she has humbled Jerusalem she will regard herself and her gods as stronger than Jerusalem and its God.

What she does not know is that in carrying out her own designs she is being used by Jehovah for the accomplishment of His purposes, and that she would be able to do nothing whatsoever against Judah or any other nation except as the Lord should permit. Assyria needed to learn that there is a God in heaven interested in questions of right and wrong, a God who will see that all transgressors receive their just dues, even those who outwardly profess to worship Him. Assyria was guilty before God for her ruthless subjugation of the various countries of the East. Her crimes against man and God, her proud boasting, her arrogance and perversity, called for judgment, and for these reasons the Lord would punish her. For a discussion of the principles on which God deals with the nations, see Ed 173–184; see on Dan. 4:17.

The bounds of the people. That is, national boundaries. It was the purpose of Assyria to eliminate these boundaries and to forestall future revolts by a policy of wholesale deportations of peoples. It was in accord with this policy, initiated by Assyria, that the people of Israel were taken to various places in Mesopotamia and Media (2 Kings 17:6), and people from Babylon, Elam, and other distant nations were placed in the cities of Samaria (2 Kings 17:24; Ezra 4:9, 10).

Robbed their treasures. See on v. 14. Assyria was proud of its depredations and its cruelty. Royal Assyrian inscriptions boast of booty taken and blood spilled. They list in detail the amount of silver and gold, of cattle and goods, carried away, of the number of bodies left impaled on stakes, of the pyramids of corpses left outside city walls, and of the rivers of blood with which they drenched the hills and plains. God knew all about this boasting, and here sets forth the reasons why it was necessary that Assyria be called to account.

Like a valiant man. Literally, “like a despot,” “like a tyrant.” The same Hebrew word is also translated “bull” or “bulls” (Ps. 50:13; Isa. 34:7), the attribute of strength being taken to designate an animal of exceptional strength. Assyria boasted incessantly of her might and of her ability to subdue and humiliate other powerful peoples of the earth.

14. As one gathereth eggs. See on v. 13. The treasures and possessions of the nations were regarded by Assyria as simply so much spoil to be taken away. In words very similar to the language of this text the Assyrian kings boasted of seizing the treasures of peoples near and far and carting them away. For instance, the famed library of Ashurbanipal contained, in large part, records and objects taken during the course of Assyrian conquests.

None that moved. Where the Assyrian armies had been, nothing but death and devastation remained. Assyrian kings describe beautiful regions they left without inhabitant and laid utterly waste and bare. Isaiah has given a vivid and accurate picture of the proud boasts of these Assyrian kings.

15. Shall the axe? Assyria was an instrument in the hands of the Lord, but she was boasting as if she were mightier than God. Little did the kings of Assyria know of Jehovah, who sat on the throne of the universe and guided the affairs of earth, setting up and taking down those whom He would (see Dan. 5:19). No earthly monarch can accomplish anything without the permission of God, and no nation can continue to exist in opposition to the divine will. Like all the other nations of earth, Assyria was as a mere “drop of a bucket” and as the “small dust of the balance” before the might of God (Isa. 40:15). Assyria needed to learn that the hand of God “is stretched out upon all the nations,” and that His hand can never be turned back by man (ch. 14:26, 27).

Shake itself. Literally, “make itself great.”

Them that lift it up. Literally, “Him who lifts it up,” that is, God.

16. Fat ones. For the symbolic use of the word translated “fat,” see on Gen. 49:20; Eze. 34:16-18. In Judges 3:29 the word is translated “lusty.” Obviously the “men of valour” there mentioned, that is, warriors, were not all literally “fat,” but rather, sturdy and vigorous. Here the “fat ones” are the well-fleshed rulers of Assyria, and, perhaps, the Assyrian army also. God will lay His hand upon them and leave them emaciated and gaunt. In other words, Assyrian power would vanish away.

Fire. God would set their glorious palaces afire and make them a heap of smoking ruins (see Amos 1:4). A century after Isaiah uttered this declaration the Assyrian Empire lay in ruins. Nineveh was a mass of ashes, and Asshur, Calah, and Dur Sharrukin were being covered by the desert sands.

17. The light of Israel. To sin and sinners the divine glory is a consuming fire (see Ex. 24:17; Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Isa. 33:14; Heb. 12:29). The Holy One, whose brightness is the glory and joy of the redeemed, is as a flame that consumes briars and thorns. “Briars” and “thorns” are favorite figures of Isaiah in describing the ruinous work of sin (see on

Isa. 9:18). Ezekiel (ch. 2:6) also uses this figurative expression for the wicked, and Paul (Heb. 6:8) likewise speaks of briars and thorns as the cursed fruitage of evil, “whose end is to be burned.”

In one day. These words point to some speedy and sudden destruction that would befall the Assyrians. Isaiah here looks forward to such scenes as the destruction of 185,000 men of Sennacherib’s army in one night (ch. 37:36).

18. The glory of his forest. One day this Assyrian force was a thing of strength and glory; the next, it had vanished from the earth—like a vast and beautiful forest swept by flames. In the Bible, evil men and nations are compared to stately trees that will be shorn of their pride and beauty (Eze. 31:3–18; Dan. 4:10–26; cf. Isa. 30:27–33).

A standardbearer. Heb. *noses*, a participial form of the verb *nasas*, “to falter,” and meaning here, literally, “a falterer.” Some suggest the meaning “sick man.” The LXX reads “he that flees,” as does also the Vulgate. The Assyrians are seen advancing on every side, and it appears that nothing can halt their progress. The prophet, however, foresees the time when Assyria will take sick, as it were, and fall. She will “falter” and faint. This translation of *nasas* is more appropriate to the context of vs. 16–19, and particularly with the first part of v. 18.

19. The trees. That is, the people (see on v. 18). Reference may be made here to the loss of Sennacherib’s host before the gates of Jerusalem (ch. 37:36), inasmuch as Sennacherib and another part of his expeditionary forces succeeded in returning to Assyria (Isa. 37:37; see on 2 Kings 19:36). But after the “fire” (Isa. 10:16) had consumed the “forest” a very few “trees” remained—so few that a child could count them.

20. Remnant of Israel. After the prophet notes the fact that a few of the Assyrians would escape the judgment sent upon them, his mind goes out to those in Israel who would survive the Assyrian invasion. The work of destruction is seldom complete. Even in the northern nation there were a few who remained after the Assyrians had done their work, and in Judah the people of Jerusalem and a few others escaped the destruction resulting from Sennacherib’s invasion. The idea of the return, or survival, of a remnant, embodied in the name of Isaiah’s son Shear-jashub (ch. 7:3), is a thought to which the prophet constantly returns (chs. 10:21, 22; 11:11, 16; 46:3).

Shall no more. Ahaz placed his confidence in Assyria (2 Kings 16:7–9; 2 Chron. 28:16–21) rather than in God. Assyria, however, was no friend of Judah, or of any other nation for that matter; she was interested only in herself. God intended that after the terrible destruction wrought by Sennacherib in Judah the “remnant” should place their confidence in Him. He it was who gave them deliverance in response to Hezekiah’s earnest prayer (Isa. 37:14–36), and in Him the faithful remnant would now place their trust. At last they recognized in Assyria a cruel master rather than a friend and helper. Reliance upon God was demonstrated as the only way to safety and victory.

21. Remnant shall return. Heb. *she’ar yashub*. Isaiah had in mind his son Shear-jashub (see on ch. 7:3). The supreme lesson Isaiah bore to Israel, however, was the lesson of Immanuel, “God with us” (see on chs. 7:14; 8:8). When the people placed their confidence in the Lord and had God with them, the greatest powers of earth could not prevail against them. God permitted these trying experiences to come upon His people in order to bring them back to Him (see on ch. 10:13).

22. *Sand of the sea.* The promised return of the remnant was a message of hope, and also a message of doom. For those who refused to return to the Lord and continued in their hypocritical and worldly ways, the message of the “remnant” brought no hope. The promise of restoration and salvation was for the “remnant” only. All others were to be lost. The doers of evil and those who knew God only in name would find no way of escape from the judgments soon to overtake the land. Though the numbers of Israel were as the sands of the sea (see Gen. 22:17; 32:12), only the faithful remnant would be saved.

The consumption decreed. God would permit destruction to consume the land, but the result would be a higher level of righteousness. Though punitive, so far as the evildoers were concerned, the visitation would be primarily corrective. Judgment upon the wicked could not be averted, but a “remnant” would “return” to the Lord, and He would accomplish His work of righteousness in them. The apostle Paul applies this verse to the Lord’s great final work on earth (Rom. 9:27, 28; cf. 2 Peter 3:10–13).

23. *A consumption.* Literally, “a burning,” one that would consume everything (see ch. 28:22).

24. *Be not afraid.* This is the practical application of the lesson of Isaiah’s message (see on ch. 7:4, 7, 9). The Assyrians will come as a “rod” of judgment (see on ch. 10:5), but do not be afraid of them. They will smite, but they will not destroy. Remain faithful to God, put your confidence in Him, accept His presence with you, and you will be spared. Though many will be lost, a remnant will be saved. Be among that remnant, and “be not afraid.” God sends a similar message to us today.

The manner of Egypt. Pharaoh had exerted all his wrath against the Israelites in Egypt, but could not prevent the Exodus. The Assyrians are also powerful and cruel, but a remnant will escape their blows.

25. *The indignation.* That is, the Lord’s wrath against the wicked, both among those who professed to worship Him and among the heathen. The wicked would perish, and then the Lord’s indignation would cease. Again the destruction of the Assyrian hosts is foretold (see on v. 19).

26. *The slaughter of Midian.* In ch. 9:4 Isaiah had referred to the breaking of the rod of the “oppressor, as in the day of Midian.” Now he again likens the forthcoming destruction of the Assyrians to the blow delivered against the Midianites and their chieftains (Judges 7:19–25).

His rod. In Egypt, Pharaoh wielded a rod of oppression, but God wielded a rod of deliverance. When the Lord’s rod was stretched over the sea, the hosts of Egypt perished. As the Lord had prepared a scourge for the enemies of His people in ancient times, so the Lord would again smite the enemies who came against Zion in the days of Isaiah. And what the Lord did then, He will do again today. The faithful remnant, not the wicked, will triumph.

27. *Because of the anointing.* The meaning of this expression is not clear in this context. The word translated “anointing” means “fat,” or “oil.” The translation “anointing” is given because oil is used in the rite of anointing. The RSV reconstructs the Hebrew text to read, “He has gone up from Rimmon.”

28. *He is come to Aiath.* Here begins a poem that pictures an invader approaching from the north to the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, striking terror to the hearts of the inhabitants. Whether it was intended as a prophecy of some particular Assyrian invasion, or is simply a poetic picture of the tide of invasion sweeping down upon the land of

Judah (see on ch. 8:7, 8) is not clear. At the time of his first invasion (in the 14th year of Hezekiah) Sennacherib did not approach Jerusalem from the north. His armies reached the Mediterranean seacoast at Sidon, then marched southward to Philistia, and from there advanced inland toward the cities of Judah. It was to Lachish, southwest of Jerusalem, that Hezekiah sent his message promising tribute (2 Kings 18:14). But there seem to have been two invasions of Sennacherib (see Vol. II, p. 64). Isaiah's poem here sets forth in a striking way the terror that would overwhelm the inhabitants of Jerusalem as the enemy force approached nearer and ever nearer the city, laying waste the country as they came.

Some have assumed that we find here a description of an actual advance on Jerusalem by some Assyrian army, perhaps that of Sargon, the record of which has been lost. That is possible but not probable. It may refer to the approach of the portion of Sennacherib's army sent against Jerusalem while the other force headed toward Egypt. The purpose of this poem is to picture the fright of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the surrounding area as an enemy force draws near.

The cities named do not all lie on a route such as an approaching army would actually follow. Aiath is probably at Ai, 93/4 mi. (15.6 km.) north by east from Jerusalem. Moving southward to Migron and Michmash, 71/8 mi. (11.4 km.) north-northeast of Jerusalem, the army lays up its baggage. It is not known whether the modern road, which dates from Roman times, represents the route followed by the highway in more ancient times. It is possible that the ancient highway was closer to the towns here named.

29. *The passage.* From Michmash the route leads downward through a deep ravine and up a steep ascent to Geba, 53/4 mi. (9.2 km.) from Jerusalem. Ramah of Benjamin (15/8 mi., 2.6 km., west of Geba) and Gibeah, the city of Saul (21/8 mi., 3.4 km., south of Ramah), are on the direct road between Michmash and Jerusalem.

30. *Gallim.* Gallim has been identified with *Khirbet Ka'kûl*, 11/4 mi. (2 km.) southeast of Gibeah of Saul (1 Sam. 25:44), and Laish was not far to the southeast. Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah, was 2 mi. (3.2 km.) southeast of Gibeah and 21/2 mi. (4 km.) northeast of Jerusalem.

31. *Madmenah.* Madmenah and Gebim have not been positively identified, but are thought to have been slightly to the north of Jerusalem.

32. *Nob.* Nob, the city of the priest Ahimelech and the site of the tabernacle in the days of Saul (1 Sam. 21:1), was possibly on Mt. Scopus, northeast of Jerusalem. Here the poem leaves the invader shaking his fist at the daughter of Zion, that is, at Jerusalem, a goal so near and yet so utterly beyond his reach. Compare the defiant words of the Rabshakeh standing just outside the walls of the city, but unable to enter (2 Kings 18:19–35).

33. *The Lord of hosts.* See Vol. I, p. 173. Isaiah now lifts his eyes from the terror-stricken inhabitants of Jerusalem and beholds the Lord of hosts seated upon the throne of the universe, keeping watch above His own. The Assyrian had boasted that he would cut down the cedars and the firs of Lebanon (2 Kings 19:23), but the Lord now makes it clear that He will hew down the "trees" (see on Isa. 10:19) of lofty stature and cut down the "thickets of the forest" (v. 34). This is a continuation of the figure of vs. 18, 19. Man proposes, but God disposes. Proud and boastful Assyria plans to cut down Judah as she has the other nations of the East, but Assyria must learn that there is a God who rules the nations of earth. See 2 Kings 19:20–34 for Isaiah's encouraging word to Hezekiah

concerning the manner in which the Lord would reveal His power against the hosts of Sennacherib and save Jerusalem.

34. And Lebanon shall fall. When the mighty Sennacherib came against Judah he “reproached the Lord” with his proud boast: “With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel” (2 Kings 19:23). These words can be understood both literally and figuratively. The Assyrians certainly planned to cut down the beautiful cedars of Lebanon for their own use. But they likewise planned to accomplish the ruin of nations symbolized by stately trees (see on Isa. 10:19). Israel had already been cut down, and Assyria planned that Judah should be next.

The Lord, however, makes it clear that what will be accomplished in this regard will be by His direction and will, not by the purpose or might of man. Israel had fallen only because God had removed His protecting hand. Eventually, Judah would also fall, as Isaiah himself had predicted (ch. 2:11–13). It was the Lord, however, who would lay low the majestic tree of Judah, not Assyria, as Sennacherib purposed. Isaiah has foretold the doom of proud and mighty Assyria, but without forgetting that the pride of Judah would likewise be humbled, that those once beautiful and stately “trees” would be cut down before the Lord.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 PK 306
5 PK 291, 349
10, 11 PK 352
18 8T 41
20 PK 299
24–27PK 350

CHAPTER 11

1 *The peaceable kingdom of the Branch out of the root of Jesse.* 10 *The victorious restoration of Israel, and vocation of the Gentiles.*

1. The stem. Literally, “the stump,” or “rootstock.” The same word is translated “stock” in Job 14:8; Isa. 40:24.

A Branch. The preceding chapter presents a picture of judgment involving both Assyria and Judah. The beautiful and flourishing “trees” of Judah would be cut down because of iniquity. The picture resembles that of Dan. 4:10–26, where Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom are likened to a stately tree cut down by divine judgment, leaving only the stump of the tree. The Lord had great plans for the Hebrew nation when it was first established. It was His purpose that it should be a messenger of light and truth to the world, and that its beneficent influence should continue to grow until it embraced the earth and brought life and peace to all men. But because of disobedience the nation was to be humbled and taken captive. For a discussion of God’s purposes for Israel see pp. 25–38.

Nevertheless, through the seed of David a King would arise and accomplish what David and his successors on the throne of Judah had thus far failed to accomplish. When the nation had been cut down, and only a stump, as it were, remained, there would spring forth from the seemingly lifeless roots a Branch that would grow and flourish (see Isa. 4:2; 53:2; Rev. 5:5; 22:16). It would become a “tree” of righteousness, and ultimately fill

the entire earth, giving peace and gladness to all mankind. The picture thus given is one of the coming golden age of joy and splendor, when all the earth will rejoice in righteousness and the enemies of right and peace will be utterly and eternally laid low. To this scene Isaiah returns again and again (see chs. 35:6–10; 65:17–25; 66:22, 23). The picture of Jesus as the righteous Branch is also found in Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15–17; Zech. 3:8; 6:12, 13. For the dual nature of the promise made to David, see on Deut. 18:15.

2. *The spirit of the Lord.* The nature of the Messiah and His mission are clearly outlined in vs. 1–5 (see Isa. 61:1–3; Matt. 3:16, 17; John 1:33; see on Luke 4:18–21).

Wisdom and understanding. For the Heb. *chokmah*, “wisdom,” and *binah*, “understanding,” and the distinction between them, see on Prov. 1:2. For the growth of Jesus in wisdom, see on Luke 2:52 cf. Isa. 50:4. As to the wisdom imparted to Christ in the conduct of His mission, see on Mark 1:35; 3:13. Wisdom in its highest form comes only from God (see Ps. 111:10). No one can teach God wisdom (Job 38:4–41; Isa. 40:13, 14), because He is allwise. He knows everything, understands everything, and takes everything into consideration—past, present, and future—in all He may say or do.

Knowledge. Heb. *da’ath* (see on Prov. 1:2; cf. Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; Eccl. 12:13). In teaching men the fear of the Lord, the folly of the ways of wickedness, and the wisdom of righteousness, Jesus gave unquestionable evidence that He was the Messiah (see Matt. 13:54; John 7:15; see on Mark 6:2).

3. *Shall make him of quick understanding.* Heb. *ruach*, here literally, “he shall inspire him,” meaning “he shall activate him.” He takes delight in performing the will of the Lord. His mind is God’s mind, His will is God’s will (see John 10:30; 14:10). Jesus revealed that He was divine, and lived out God’s righteousness before men; in fact, that was one reason why He came to earth (see on Matt. 1:23; Luke 2:49).

Sight of his eyes. Human beings are likely to judge according to appearances, but the counsel of Christ was, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24; see on 1 Sam. 16:7). It is said of Jesus that “he knew all men” and that “he knew what was in man” (John 2:24, 25). Every Christian should avoid judging “after the sight of his eyes,” and reproving others “after the hearing of his ears.” How many otherwise exemplary Christians form hurried opinions concerning their fellow Christians and criticize them on hearsay evidence!

4. *With righteousness.* The judges were corrupt, taking advantage of the poor and the unfortunate, and the rich were grinding down widows and orphans (Isa. 1:23; 10:1, 2; Jer. 5:28; Amos 2:6; 4:1; 5:10, 11; 8:4–6; Zech. 7:10). The spirit of the promised Messiah was in striking contrast with the spirit of the times. Justice, equity, mercy, and a sympathetic consideration for the needs of the poor and downtrodden are the principles constantly set forth as characterizing the ideal king (see Ps. 72:2, 3, 12–14).

Reprove. Heb. *yakach*, “to call to account for,” “to decide.”

Smite the earth. Isaiah pictures Messiah returning to the earth to subdue His enemies and to take His kingdom (see Dan. 2:43, 44; Rev. 19:11–21; cf. Rev. 12:5; 14:14–20). Then He will “smite” the unjust rulers of earth. When Christ sets up His kingdom He will “break in pieces and consume” all the kingdoms of earth (Dan. 2:44) and “rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers” (Rev. 2:27; cf. Ps. 2:8, 9). In Rev. 1:16 “a sharp twoedged sword” is pictured as coming from the mouth of Christ, and in 2 Thess. 2:8 He is described as destroying the Antichrist “with the spirit of

his mouth” (see also Hosea 6:5). As Christ created all things by the word of His mouth (Ps. 33:6, 9; John 1:1–3), even so will He destroy all that is evil.

5. Girdle of his loins. Messiah is pictured clothed in garments of righteousness. The figure implies a strict regard for justice and truth, integrity and faithfulness. Messiah is to be the very embodiment of righteousness. In contrast, Antichrist is said to work “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:10). The followers of Christ are to wear the same garment of righteousness He wears (see on Matt. 22:11, 12; cf. Isa. 61:10; Rev. 3:18).

Reins. Literally, the “loins,” that part of the body between the lowest, or false, ribs, and the hip bones. In contrast, the word translated “loins” refers to the hips and the small of the back.

6. The wolf. Messiah’s kingdom will see a change in the animal kingdom as well as in human beings. Bloodshed and cruelty will be no more. The basic instincts of the animal world will be entirely transformed. The law of God’s kingdom will be the law of life and love. Neither death, nor sickness, nor pain will be known there in any form.

7. Eat straw. There will be no carnivorous animals in the earth made new. All creatures will live on terms of perfect friendship with one another and with man.

8. The sucking child. As the young of animals will have no fear of creatures that, in this world, are their deadly enemies, so in the new earth little children will have nothing to fear. Enmity and fear, among either animals or men, will be utterly unknown in the earth made new.

Cockatrice. Heb. *siph’oni*, a “poisonous serpent,” an “adder.”

9. My holy mountain. That is, the kingdom of Christ, which will fill the entire world (Dan. 2:35). It will be holy because God is holy and because its inhabitants will share His nature. There they will neither hurt nor destroy, because the interests of one will not conflict with those of another. The well-being of each will be the well-being of all. Selfishness will be a thing of the past. The only thought of man will be to do good unto his neighbor and to live to the glory of God.

The earth shall be full. Compare Hab. 2:14. One pulse of harmony will beat throughout the vast universe (GC 678).

10. A root of Jesse. See on v. 1.

The Gentiles. This is a prophecy of Christ and of the giving of the gospel to all the world (see pp. 28–30). In every part of the earth the Messiah will be held up before men and women as the means of salvation from sin. Messengers of Christ will stand before men and women as His representatives, pointing to Him as the ensign to guide the peoples of earth in the way of light and blessing.

Rest. Heb. *nuach*, “resting place,” or “dwellings” (RSV). See John 14:2, 3. Those who find Christ find peace and rest, a peace that the world cannot give and that the wicked can never know. The most blessed experience possible for man is to enjoy the “rest” Christ offers, rest from the cares and burdens of sin (see on Matt. 11:28). Thus man may find in this world a brief and happy foretaste of the glorious rest and peace of the eternal world.

11. The second time. That is, in contrast with the first time, the original deliverance from Egypt. The Hebrews always looked back with joy upon their release from the bondage of Egypt and their entry into the Promised Land. Now there was to be another deliverance, from Babylonian captivity. God designed that when the Jews returned from

captivity, having learned the lessons He intended them to learn, they would quickly measure up to His glorious plan for them as a nation. Thus the world would soon be prepared for the coming of Messiah and the proclamation of the gospel (see p. 29). But again Israel failed, and the deliverance here promised will be accomplished at the end of the world, when God sets His hand to deliver His people from this evil world and to lead them into the heavenly Canaan (see on Rev. 18:4).

12. Israel ... Judah. Insofar as the literal nations of Israel and Judah were concerned, the literal fulfillment of the promise here made came with the restoration from Babylonian captivity. However, their failure to live up to the glorious privileges vouchsafed to them upon return from captivity made their rejection as a nation inevitable (see on v. 11). Therefore, in principle, this promise is to be fulfilled to spiritual Israel, the church (see pp. 35, 36). Accordingly, these words point to the great work of deliverance from sin now going on in every part of the world. Everywhere men and women are acting as ensigns, or beacons, for heaven, guiding men and women into the way of light and truth. The work now being witnessed is in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, and is an earnest of greater things yet to come (see on Rev. 18:4).

Four corners. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs lacks the word "four."

13. The envy also of Ephraim. The history of the people of God was a history of jealousy, envy, trouble, dissension, and war. Isaiah's vision of the future would not be perfect or complete if it did not envisage a healing of the old wounds and a reconciliation between Israel and Judah. Before the final extinction of the northern kingdom, Hezekiah put forth earnest efforts to bring about a spirit of reconciliation by inviting the members of the northern tribes to come to Jerusalem for the celebration of the national Passover (2 Chron. 30).

14. The Philistines. The peoples here mentioned were the traditional enemies of Israel. This prophecy was conditional upon Israel's faithfulness to God (see Jer. 18:7–10). As a result of Israel's persistent failure to cooperate with God she forfeited His blessing, and He could not subdue her enemies as He would have done (see p. 31). In principle, however, this promise will be fulfilled to the church today, for God will vanquish all her enemies (see Dan. 7:18; 12:1; Rev. 19:2; see on Deut. 18:15). The setting up of Messiah's kingdom will see the utter defeat of all His enemies. When Christ comes, the kingdom He sets up (see Matt. 25:31) "shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

15. Tongue of the Egyptian sea. That is, what is now known as the Gulf of Suez—an arm of the Red Sea—the waters of which would again be dried up, perhaps figuratively rather than literally, to facilitate another miraculous and glorious deliverance from Egypt.

The river. Heb. *hannahar*, used commonly in the OT of the Euphrates (see Gen. 15:18; see on Gen. 24:10). The Euphrates would be dried up to prepare the way for deliverance from Babylon. The two nations of antiquity that most heavily oppressed the Hebrew people were Egypt and Babylon, and both of these powers were smitten by the hand of the Lord in order to accomplish the deliverance of His people. Egypt was smitten at the time of the Exodus, when the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea. Babylon was smitten near the end of the 70 years of captivity (which was still future in the time of Isaiah), when the Euphrates was turned out of its course by Cyrus in order that he might capture the city of Babylon (see Isa. 44:27, 28; see on Jer. 51:36). It was after his capture of the city of Babylon (see on Ezra 1:1) that Cyrus issued his decree permitting the Jews

to leave Babylon, return to Judea, and rebuild the Temple (2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1–6). As God delivered the Hebrews from the Egyptians, and later from the Babylonians, so will He deliver all His faithful people at the close of time.

16. An highway. As God led His people safely through the “terrible wilderness” (Deut. 1:19), and a thousand years later brought them back from Babylon (see Isa. 19:23–25; 35:8), so He will safely conduct His remnant people through the great time of trouble forecast by Daniel (see on Dan. 12:1; cf. Jer. 30:7).

Assyria. That is, Mesopotamia, the homeland of Assyria. In the days of Isaiah, Babylon was a province of Assyria (see Vol. II, pp. 61–63; see on Ezra 6:22).

The Kingdom of Judah in Isaiah’s Time

4



Like as it was. The marvelous power of God displayed in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea lived on in the memory of God’s people, whose minds ever reverted to these dramatic events as evidence that their God was the true God and that they were His chosen people.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AA 223
1–5DA 56; PK 695

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 10:24). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

2, 3 AA 224
4 DA 103; Ed 182; 3T 444
6 EW 18; GC 676; 1T 68
9 DA 828; Ev 456; GC 676; PK 371; 1T 36; 6T 131; 8T 47
10 PK 695
10–12PK 376
11 EW 70, 74, 86; 6T 133; 7T 172; 9T 51

CHAPTER 12

A joyful thanksgiving of the faithful for the mercies of God.

1. *I will praise thee.* This chapter is a psalm of thanksgiving. It stands as a fitting sequel to the previous chapter, in which the Messiah effects the deliverance of the righteous from the hands of their oppressors. As the song of Moses (Ex. 15) was sung by the children of Israel after their deliverance from Egypt, another song of deliverance is to be sung when “the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people” (Isa. 11:11). Similar hymns of triumph appear in chs. 25 and 26. See Rev. 15:3, where the redeemed of all ages sing a song of triumph after their final victory.

2. *God is my salvation.* At the time of Sennacherib’s invasion it was God, not the walls surrounding Zion or the armies of Israel, that gave salvation to His people (ch. 37:33–36). In the last days the faithful remnant will be saved from the power of the enemy by the hand of the Lord.

The Lord Jehovah. Heb. *Yah Yahweh*, a repetition of the sacred name, first in its abbreviated form and then in full. The repetition may be for emphasis. This repetition of the divine name is characteristic of Isaiah.

3. *Wells of salvation.* When the Israelites were in the desert, God supplied them with water from the smitten rock (Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:8–11). This miracle was later celebrated by an impressive ceremony in the Temple at the Feast of Tabernacles (see DA 449). Water drawn from the spring of Shiloah (see on Isa. 8:6) was carried to the Temple in a golden vessel and poured out at the altar of burnt offering. As the priests made their way to the spring, accompanied by a Levitical choir, many worshipers followed them thither to drink of the living water as it flowed from the spring on the side of the Temple hill. Jesus alluded to this ceremony in John 7:37 when, on the last day of the feast, He invited the people to come to Him and drink. Christ is the fountain whence flows the water that will bring life and healing to the nations (Eze. 47:1; Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8; see DA 37).

4. *Declare his doings.* The people of God are encouraged to remember His mercies in their behalf and to tell others of His wonderful blessings. If there were more of praise among the people of God there would be less of discouragement and faultfinding. It is the man who fails to remember the wonderful mercies of Heaven who is the most likely to forget God (Rom. 1:21–23) and to dwell on the mistakes of his brethren.

5. *Excellent things.* The deeds of mercy on the part of God toward His children are without number. Then why not remember them and sing praises to the Lord for His excellent mercies? Song drives away discouragement, fear, and temptation, and fortifies the soul against the wiles of the devil.

6. *The Holy One of Israel.* See on ch. 1:4. Isaiah did not represent a far-distant God, who shut Himself away in a holy heaven, but a God who dwelt with His people (chs. 57:15; 66:1, 2). The fact that God was with His people—Immanuel, “God [is] with us”—was the message of his life and words (see chs. 7:14; 8:8, 10). Those who have been

delivered from sin within and from enemies without (see on v. 1) cannot remain silent concerning the mercies of Heaven. It is not enough to look forward to standing on the sea of glass as the time to join in the song of the redeemed; it is our privilege in this life to lift our voices in song, with the joy and peace of heaven in our hearts. This hymn of praise (ch. 12) brings to a close what has been called the “Immanuel volume” of Isaiah’s prophecy.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–6PK 321

1 CT 242

2, 3 DA 449

3 CT 371; PP 412; 6T 86

6 PK 351, 581

CHAPTER 13

1 *God mustereth the armies of his wrath. 6 He threateneth to destroy Babylon by the Medes. 19 The desolation of Babylon.*

1. The burden. Or, “load”; technically, as here, “oracle,” “solemn message.” This title is often employed by Isaiah for messages delivered against various powers (see chs. 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1; 22:1; 23:1). This “burden” continues through ch. 14:28 (see on ch. 14:1). It came in the year 716/715 (see on ch. 14:28). Having delivered a series of messages against Judah and Jerusalem, Isaiah now directs his attention to the surrounding nations. This section includes chs. 13–23. These messages were borne, not primarily to the nations mentioned in them, but to God’s own people, Israel, in order that they might understand God’s dealings with the nations about them. Isaiah begins with Babylon and, in turn, discusses such nations as Moab, Syria, Ethiopia, and Tyre. In the patriarchal period Babylon had been the great power of the Orient. But about 800 years before the time of Isaiah, Babylon passed into a state of eclipse, while such nations as Egypt, Assyria, and the Hittite empire occupied dominant places in Near Eastern affairs.

Though, in Isaiah’s day, a vassal kingdom of the Assyrian Empire, Babylon was beginning to regain its lost power, and within another century was again to be the outstanding nation of Western Asia. In 729/728 Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria became king of Babylon, ruling under the name of Pulu, and in 709 Sargon became king of Babylon. During the reigns of Sargon and Sennacherib, Merodach-baladan of Babylon posed a serious threat to Assyrian power. He was repeatedly driven from Babylon, but always came back. It was Merodach-baladan who courted an alliance with Hezekiah, to assist him in his struggles against Assyria. Infuriated by the frequent revolts of Babylon, Sennacherib, in 689, destroyed the city, which was rebuilt later in that century. On this period see Vol. II, pp. 61–65, 87, 88, 156, 157.

2. Lift ye up a banner. God was to give the signal for the destruction of Babylon. It was He who so directed affairs among the nations that one power after another was to turn its attention against the proud and wicked city until finally it would be utterly destroyed. A banner set upon a mountain would be clearly seen, and thus it was with the Lord’s signal for Babylon’s doom. The shaking, or waving, of the hand was a gesture of anger and threatened judgment against the city (see on ch. 10:32).

High mountain. Literally, “smooth mountain,” or “a mountain swept bare.”

3. My sanctified ones. Or, “my dedicated ones,” “my consecrated ones” (RSV)—those set apart for the performance of a particular task. The Assyrians (Isa. 10:5), the

Babylonians (Jer. 25:9; Hab. 1:6), and later the Medes and Persians (Isa. 13:17; Isa. 45:1–4; cf. Dan. 5:30, 31) were ordained to play their assigned roles upon the stage of history.

Them that rejoice in my highness. Literally, “my haughty [or, high] exulting ones.” Assyria (see ch. 10:7–14) and Babylon (see Dan. 4:30; 5:20–28) were haughty and arrogant in exercising the power permitted them by Heaven.

4. Noise of a multitude. Literally, “noise of tumult.”

The mountains. In Hebrew ch. 13 is poetic, and Isaiah probably uses “mountains” in a simple poetic sense. It is improbable that these are symbolic “mountains” because this is not a symbolic prophecy.

Mustereth the host. Compare Jer. 50:9, 10, 14, 29–31; Eze. 38:14–16; Joel 3:1, 2, 9–17; Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 14:2, 3; Rev. 16:13, 14; 17:14, 17; 19:11–21. The host is mustered for the battle against Babylon. It should be remembered that Isa. 13 is entitled “the burden of Babylon” (v. 1), and that in its entirety the chapter is a literal prediction of the fall and desolation of literal Babylon. But NT writers have presented the fall of literal Babylon as a figure of the fall of mystical Babylon (see Rev. 14:8; 17:16; 18:4; 19:2). Therefore, the description here given of the fall of literal Babylon may also be considered descriptive of the fall of mystical Babylon insofar as Inspiration has made application of the details to the fall of mystical Babylon. Concerning the dual fulfillment of certain predictions, see on Deut. 18:15; see also p. 35.

Of the battle. That is, “to battle,” or “for battle.”

5. The weapons. That is, God’s means of bringing judgment upon Babylon. Compare the plagues on Egypt and God’s “indignation” against other nations and at the end of the world (see Ex. 7:19 to 12:30; Isa. 26:20; 34:2–8; Nahum 1:5–7; Rev. 14:10; 15:1).

6. The day of the Lord. This expression occurs at least 20 times in the writings of the various OT prophets. It is always used in reference to a time of divine judgment upon a city or nation (rather than upon individuals), or eventually upon the inhabitants of the whole world. In contrast, what might be called “the day of man” is described in Scripture as the “day of salvation” (Isa. 49:8; 2 Cor. 6:2), “an acceptable time” (Ps. 69:13; Isa. 49:8), the time when probation for men as individuals or as nations still lingers (see Ps. 95:7, 8, Heb. 4:7).

Conversely, “the day of the Lord” is the time when, historically, the probation of a city or a nation closes, and ultimately when the destiny of all men is forever fixed. During the “day of salvation” men and nations are free to exercise their God-given power to choose between right and wrong, but with the arrival of “the day of the Lord” God’s will becomes supreme, being no longer circumscribed by the exercise of the human will.

“The day of the Lord” against Judah (see Isa. 2:12; Joel 1:15; 2:1; Zeph. 1:7) was thus the day when, as a nation, it was no longer permitted to continue on in its reprobate course and divine judgment was meted out against it (see Eze. 12:21–28). The same was true with the northern kingdom, Israel (Amos 5:18), with Egypt (Eze. 30:3), with Edom (Obadiah 15), and with other nations of antiquity (see Dan. 5:22–31). What happens to a city or to an entire nation when “the day of the Lord” comes to it is similar to what will happen to the whole world at the close of its probation. In Matt. 24, for instance, Christ’s description of “the day of the Lord” upon the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation is manifestly similar in many respects to what will also be true of the entire world at the time of Christ’s “coming, and of the end of the world” (Matt. 24:3; Luke 21:20; cf. Matt. 24:30). Thus, principles that apply when “the day of the Lord” comes to any city or

nation also apply when “the day of the Lord” comes upon the world as a whole, and an OT prophetic description of the fate of some ancient city or nation in terms of “the day of the Lord” applies also in principle to “the great day of the Lord” (Zeph. 1:14) at the end of time. In view of the fact that NT writers make of the fate of ancient Babylon a figure of the fate of spiritual Babylon (see on Isa. 13:4), and because they apply the expression, “the day of the Lord,” to the time when Christ returns to earth in judgment (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10), “the day of the Lord” upon Babylon, as described in Isa. 13 is, in many respects, also descriptive of “the great day of the Lord” at the end of time.

It shall come as a destruction. “The day of the Lord” is never referred to in Scripture as a time when men will have a second chance, another opportunity to accept salvation. “The day of the Lord” is always, without exception, a day of judgment, a day of destruction, a day of darkness (see Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2; Amos 5:18–20; etc.).

7. Be faint. Literally, “relax,” “drop,” “droop.” This posture of the hands reflects feelings of discouragement, helplessness, and sometimes, as here, hopelessness. Men in abject despondency or terror let their hands fall helplessly to their sides (see Heb. 12:12).

8. A woman that travaileth. This figure of speech appears often as a description of extreme pain and anguish (see Ps. 48:6; Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 49:24; 50:43).

As flames. As men look at one another in utter horror, eyes glazed with terror, fear flashes forth with the intensity of a flame.

9. The day of the Lord. See on v. 6.

Lay the land desolate. The end of sin is not life and prosperity, but desolation, ruin, and death. Sin laid waste the once prosperous nations of Assyria and Babylon, it destroyed many of the greatest cities of the earth, and it will ultimately lay desolate the entire world. This prophecy, originally a description of the fall of literal Babylon, is applied by NT writers to the desolation of mystical Babylon at the second coming of Christ (see on v. 4).

Destroy the sinners. The destruction of the sinner is not, as some think, an arbitrary act on the part of God. God loves sinners and seeks to save them (Eze. 18:23, 31, 32; 2 Peter 3:9). But it is sin that ultimately destroys the sinner. Men who walk in the ways of iniquity ultimately become so corrupt, so cruel, so devoid of reason, that the measures they take to destroy those about them involve all in a common fate. “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Gen. 9:6). “All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matt. 26:52; cf. Rev. 13:10). History has proved these statements true. Babylon took the sword and perished by it. That was also true of the Hittites, of Assyria, of Greece, and of Rome. One day this principle will seal the fate of the sinful world.

10. The stars. A supernatural darkness in which the luminaries of heaven withhold their light is often mentioned as one of the phenomena accompanying the great and terrible “day of the Lord” (Joel 2:10, 11; 13:15, 16; Amos 8:9; see also Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24, 25; Luke 21:25; Rev. 6:12, 13; GC 636, 637). See EW 41.

11. Punish the world. Justice requires that wrong be punished. God is just, and will not permit the wickedness of men to go unpunished. Sinners need to realize that a day of reckoning for their misdeeds is sure to come (see Eccl. 8:11).

12. More precious. Or, “more rare.” The judgment upon the wicked involves the depopulation of the earth, and leaves it a desolate ruin (v. 9). Only the righteous

remnant will escape the general destruction. Few in number, they will be as “precious,” or “rare,” as the fine gold of Ophir.

13. *Shake the heavens.* With respect to the fall of literal Babylon, vs. 13, 14 are a figurative description of the utter desolation portrayed more literally in vs. 19–22. With respect to the end of the world, they are literal (see Heb. 12:26; Rev. 6:14; PP 340). Tremendous convulsions will mark the closing scenes of earth’s history (see Rev. 6:14; 16:18, 21). It is the voice of God that “shakes the heavens and the earth” (GC 637; cf. Isa. 2:21).

His fierce anger. That is, against literal Babylon (see v. 19; see on v. 4). With respect to mystical Babylon and the end of the world, the scenes here described constitute the closing events of the seventh of the seven last plagues, wherein “great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath” (Rev. 16:19).

14. *As the chased roe.* Or, “like a hunted gazelle” (RSV). See on v. 4. In the last days the wicked of all nations will be scattered as sheep without a shepherd. As in fright animals seek places that have, in the past, been places of shelter and refuge, so the wicked will seek for some place to hide from the final wrath of God, but will find none.

15. *Shall be thrust through.* The prophet continues his graphic description of the fall of Babylon, applied by NT writers to the second coming of Christ (see on v. 4). The Babylonians flee before their enemies.

17. *The Medes.* In the time of Isaiah, Assyria was the chief enemy of Babylon. In the year 689, for instance, the armies of Sennacherib utterly demolished that city (see Vol. II, p. 65). But the Median kingdom was then a relatively insignificant power. Here, prophecy forecasts a time when Media would play a prominent part in the downfall of Babylon. When Babylon fell into the hands of Cyrus in 539, the Medes cooperated with the Persians in bringing about its downfall. In the final struggle Darius the Mede played a very important part (Dan. 5:31). Isaiah also predicted the part that Cyrus was to play in the struggle against Babylon (Isa. 44:27, 28; Isa 45:1–3). However, the final ruin of Babylon came centuries later (see on v. 19).

Silver. The Medes are here pictured as a people whose chief concern was not booty. They sought Babylon itself, and were not primarily interested in its wealth. They sought power. They came, not to pillage, but to conquer.

19. *The glory of kingdoms.* It was not until a century after the time of Isaiah that, under the Chaldean dynasty, Babylon reached the peak of fame and achieved universal renown for its splendor and beauty.

Sodom. See on Gen. 19:24. Jeremiah, who saw Babylon at the height of its power, also predicted that its overthrow would be like that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jer. 50:40). Its destruction would be absolute—it would never be rebuilt (Jer. 51:64). Such is also to be the fate of mystical Babylon at the end of the world (Rev. 18:21). During the lifetime of Isaiah the city of Babylon was utterly destroyed by Sennacherib (see on v. 17), yet it was soon rebuilt by Sennacherib’s son, Esarhaddon. Later, when Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon, he made it one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world. Upon capturing Babylon in 539 the Medes and Persians did not destroy the city, but made it their capital. Half a century later, when the city rebelled, Xerxes partly destroyed it. Thenceforth it was never completely restored and lost its former pre-eminence. However,

it became, in a partly ruined state, a capital of Alexander the Great after he took it in 331. This prophecy of Isaiah was therefore not fulfilled till some centuries after his death.

Not until the reign of Seleucus Nicator (312–280 B.C.) over the eastern division of Alexander's empire (see on Dan. 7:6) did Babylon lose its place of importance. About 305 this king established a new capital on the Tigris 34 mi. (54 km.) north-northeast of Babylon, on the site of Opis, and named it Seleucia, after himself. The materials and part of the population of the new city were taken from Babylon, whose pre-eminence was thus permanently destroyed. Yet Babylon continued to be of some importance for perhaps two centuries more. By the time of Strabo, about 20 B.C. or a little later, the greater part of the city had become a vast desolation (Strabo xvi. 1. 5), though still inhabited. In the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98–117) it was a complete ruin.

20. *Never be inhabited.* When Babylon was finally in ruins it became a forsaken city. A century after Isaiah, Jeremiah uttered a similar prediction (Jer. 51:37).

The Arabian. The term "Arabian" is employed as a general designation for the nomadic tribes of Bedouins that wander to and fro in the desert east of Palestine.

Pitch tent. Since the desolation of Babylon in ancient times (see on v. 19) the site has not been inhabited. Visitors of past generations sometimes reported that Bedouins of that vicinity avoided the ruins out of superstitious horror of the place. This may indeed have been true at some time in the past, but the reason the Bedouins give today is simply that the ancient ruins do not provide a suitable place for human habitation. As in millenniums past, "the Arabian" does not "pitch his tent there."

Nevertheless, a Bedouin settlement on the site of ancient Babylon would not invalidate Isaiah's prediction. The prophet was not so much concerned with its impregnable walls and stately palaces as with its pagan religion, heathen culture, and military might. His graphic picture of the city as an abandoned ruin emphatically declares that the proud empire of his day would vanish from the earth. The centuries testify to the accuracy of Isaiah's prediction, for nothing remains of that ancient civilization but its ruins. See also on Eze. 26:14.

21. *Wild beasts.* After its desertion by men the site of ancient Babylon became the habitation of wild animals. Instead of strong men and beautiful women, beasts of the wild would inhabit the city.

Doleful creatures. Heb. *'ochim*, a word that occurs only here and whose meaning is not certain. The word *'ochim* is thought to imitate the creature's cry. Some think the eagle owl is here meant; others translate *'ochim* as "shriekers."

Owls. Heb. *benoth ya'anah*, "ostriches."

Satyrs. Heb. *śe'irim*, plural of *śa'ir*, literally, "hairy," or "shaggy." Because goats are unusually hairy, the expression "hairy [one]" came into use as meaning "goat." The name Seir (Gen. 32:3) is from the same Hebrew word. *Śa'ir* was later used of mythical demons supposed to have the appearance of goats, but there is no evidence that Isaiah here refers to demons. The other creatures mentioned in Isa. 13:21, 22 are literal animals. As here used, *śa'ir* means simply "[wild] goat."

22. Wild beasts. Heb. *'ıyyim*, probably meaning “jackals” or “hyenas.” Instead of the music of the gay Babylonian feasts there would be heard in the ruins of the ancient palaces the doleful wailing of the various wild creatures here mentioned.

Dragons. Heb. *tannim*, “jackals.” The translation “dragons” is due to confusing *tannim* with *tannin*, which means “dragon,” or “whale” (see on Ps. 74:13).

Near to come. The city of Babylon was completely destroyed by Sennacherib in the year 689 B.C., during the lifetime of Isaiah (see on vs. 17, 19). This was not its final end, however, as the city was rebuilt.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 GC 638

7, 8 PP 340

9 EW 66; GC 310; PP 167

11 Ev 219; GC 310; PK 276, 532; PP 340

12 AH 32; CG 193; CH 285; COL 374; DA 287, 790; FE 87; MB 81, 89; MH 182; ML 121, 263; MYP 108; PP 223; SR 49; Te 287; 1T 538; 2T 184, 593; 3T 254; 4T 541, 607; 5T 98, 439, 482; 9T 186

13 PP 340

19 Ed 176

19–22PK 533

CHAPTER 14

1 *God's merciful restoration of Israel. 4 Their triumphant insultation over Babel. 24 God's purpose against Assyria. 29 Palestina is threatened.*

1. Mercy on Jacob. This chapter is a continuation of the prophecy of ch. 13 concerning the fall of Babylon (ch. 13:1; cf. ch. 14:28). The message came to Isaiah in the year 716/715 (see v. 28; Vol. II, p. 77). The fall of Babylon to the Medes and Persians would result in the release and restoration of the people of Israel whom the Babylonians had taken captive. Soon after capturing Babylon, Cyrus issued his memorable decree authorizing the Jews to return to their homeland and to rebuild the Temple (2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1–3).

Strangers. That is, Gentiles. Isaiah here introduces one of his favorite themes—the great ingathering of men from all nations to the worship and service of the true God (see p. 28). To this subject he reverts again and again (chs. 44:5; 54:2, 3; 55:5; 56:4–8; 60:1–5; etc.). This prophecy was partially fulfilled in OT times (see p. 29), and more fully in the great ingathering of Gentiles in apostolic times (Acts 10:1, 2, 48; 11:18; 13:46–48; etc.). It is being fulfilled today as men of all nations come to the saving knowledge of the gospel.

2. People. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “many people.”

Rule over their oppressors. Had the Jews diligently served the Lord upon their return from Babylon, it was His plan that they would finally rule the earth (see p. 30). Eventually, all men would have recognized one another as brethren. All would have worshiped the Lord and rejoiced in His salvation. Israel, however, failed again, after the Captivity, to measure up to God's ideal for them (see p. 31), and never realized the glorious privilege that might have been theirs. In the final triumph of the saints at the close of time, however, God's people of all ages will rule over their enemies (Dan. 7:14, 18, 27).

3. Give thee rest. As the Israelites had been slaves in Egypt, so they would be captives in Babylon. And as God gave them rest from servitude in Egypt, so He would grant them rest from their forced sojourn in Babylon. The Promised Land was to have been this place of rest. But Israel, because of their sins, again failed to enter into the promised rest. This promise is therefore reserved for spiritual Israel, who are to be gathered from among all nations and delivered from the final attempt of Babylon to enslave the world. The people of God will eventually find “rest” in the heavenly Canaan, the earth made new.

4. Proverb. Heb. *mashal*, a word rendered “proverb” 19 times and “parable” 18 times (see Vol. III p. 945). In view of the fact that *mashal* here applies to the entire section, vs. 4–28, and not to the exclamation of v. 4 alone, the translation “parable” is preferable (see Num. 23:7; Job 29:1; Eze. 17:2). For the application of this section to literal Babylon, compare Isa. 13:1 with ch. 14:28 (see on chs. 13:4; 14:1). Upon deliverance from captivity (ch. 14:1–3) God’s people would take up this taunt against their former oppressor. For the application to mystical Babylon see on ch. 13:4.

The king of Babylon. The one primarily responsible for Babylonian policy. For “the king of Babylon” as a figurative designation for Lucifer, see on v. 12.

Golden city. The translation of the Heb. *madhebah*, “golden,” assumes that the word is derived from the Aramaic *dahab*, “gold.” However, the Hebrew word for “gold” is *zahab*, and it has been thought unlikely that the Hebrews would derive a word for “golden” from the Aramaic rather than from their own word for “gold.” It has therefore been suggested that *madhebah* should read *marhebah*, “terror,” Hebrew letters for *r* and *d* being practically identical (see p. 14), and the one therefore easily mistaken for the other. The LXX, the Syriac, and the Targums all support the reading “terror,” as does also the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs. A related form of the word is translated “overcome” in of S. of Sol. 6:5. It therefore seems probable that the last clause should read “the terror ceased!” This would make it parallel to “the oppressor ceased!” See on ch. 13:19; see Additional Note on Dan. 4.

5. The staff. The staff and the scepter are symbols of power. The Lord would utterly break the power of Babylon (see on ch. 13:19–22).

6. Who smote the people. Babylon, which in its wrath smote the nations with “unceasing blows” (RSV; see Jer. 50:23) and which ruled over them in anger, would itself become subject of wrath and would be smitten with blow after blow, from which there would eventually be no recovery.

7. The whole earth. Literally, a picture of the world when the king of Babylon has “ceased” (v. 4), and figuratively, when Satan’s rule has come to an end (see on ch. 13:4). Not until then will the earth be “at rest” and “quiet.” The doom of Satan brings gladness and rejoicing to the people of God, for their oppression is then over, and they will inherit the earth made new and reign forever. Figuratively, the whole world, which has for so long groaned under the curse of evil, rejoices as it is delivered from the power of the oppressor.

8. Fir trees. Heb. *beroshim*, “[Phoenician] junipers.” In highly figurative language the “king of Babylon” (v. 4) is compared to a tree (see Dan. 4:11, 22; cf. Judges 9:8–15; Eze. 31:16). The other “trees” of the “forest” rejoice when this pretentious and arrogant

“tree” is laid low. The Assyrian monarchs boasted of cutting down the forests and leaving the country a desolate waste (see Isa. 37:24). The armies of Babylon likewise wrought wide devastation (see Jer. 25:11). There is universal rejoicing when the work of destruction comes to its end. Compare the rejoicing of “apostles and prophets” at the fall of mystical Babylon (Rev. 18:20; cf. Rev. 19:1–6).

No feller. Or, “hewer,” that is, “woods-man.” No one now comes to fell the trees, and the forests of earth rejoice at their deliverance.

9. Hell. Heb. *she’ol* (see on Prov. 15:11), the figurative realm of the dead. The same word is translated “grave” in Isa. 14:11. *She’ol* is personified as rising to greet the king of Babylon (see v. 15). Those whom he has slain welcome him who once ruled like a tyrant on earth, sending others to their doom. Now, figuratively, the powers of evil are removed from their “thrones” on earth to descend into the shadows of death (see Rev. 20:10, 14). The same imagery is used by Ezekiel (Eze. 32:18–32). Compare Isa. 24:22; Rev. 6:15, 16; 19:20.

10. Like unto us. The king of Babylon, who had slain so many others, would himself be slain. Satan (see on vs. 4, 12), who has led so many others into ruin and death, himself now enters the realm of death (see Rev. 20:10). The author of death must himself taste its bitter fruit.

11. Thy pomp. All the pomp and ostentation of the evil one vanishes in the coldness and darkness of the grave. The once mighty ruler of Babylon, and of the hosts of evil (see on vs. 4, 12), is utterly humbled in the dust. The folly of arrogance and pride is here derided (see Ps. 2:1–4).

Grave. From the same Hebrew word translated “hell” in v. 9.

Viols. Or, “harps” (see Vol. III, p. 33).

Worm. Heb. *rimmah*, “maggot.” The word “worms” is from *tole’ah*. The proud king of Babylon now lies in *she’ol* upon a bed of maggots, with worms for a coverlet. “The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

Lucifer. Heb. *helel*, literally, “shining one,” “brilliant one,” from the root *halal*, which means “to flash forth light,” “to shine,” “to be brilliant.” The name *helel*, and its equivalent in related languages, was commonly applied to the planet Venus as a morning star because of its unrivaled brilliance. Venus is the brightest of all the planets, and at maximum brilliance shines more than seven times brighter than Sirius, brightest, of all the fixed stars. When favorably situated, it is easily visible to the naked eye at noonday, and after dark it casts a shadow. The LXX renders *helel* as *heōsphoros*, “morning star,” literally, “bringer of the dawn,” the common Greek designation for Venus when it appeared in the morning sky. Compare the Heb. *helel ben-shachar*, “Lucifer, son of the morning,” literally, “shining one, son of dawn.”

The name Lucifer comes from the Latin Vulgate, and means “light bearer.” The term, as here used, seems first to have been identified with Satan by Tertullian, Jerome, and other early Fathers of the church, and into common usage in this sense during the Middle Ages. In 2 Peter 1:19 Christ is referred to as *phōsphoros*, “day star”; literally, “light bearer.” In Rev. 22:16 He is called “the bright and morning star [literally, “dawn star,” or

“star of the dawn”].” As applied to Satan, the various terms—*helel*, *heōsphoros*, *Lucifer*, etc.—seem to reflect the thought of the high position he once held in heaven, next to Christ, and to imply that he is, even now, a rival of Christ. Strictly speaking, none of these terms is a proper name, though all have come to have that meaning; rather, they are attributive terms denoting the high state from which Lucifer fell. This description applies to Satan before his fall, as next to Christ in power and authority and head of the angelic hosts. For a further description of Satan (under the designation “king of Tyrus”) see Eze. 28:12–19.

Cut down. For the war between Christ and Satan, in which Satan was defeated and cast out to earth, see Rev. 12:7–9; see on Eze. 28:16–18.

Weaken the nations. Compare vs. 4–6, 9–11.

13. Above the stars of God. See on Job 38:7. The desire for self-exaltation was the cause of the downfall of Lucifer. Before his fall he was the most beautiful and the wisest of all the angels of heaven. He took surpassing pride in the honor God had bestowed upon him, but sought still greater glory for himself.

Mount of the congregation. Heb. *har-mo‘ed*, “mountain of assembly.” Compare the expression, “mountain of God,” in the parallel passage, Eze. 28:16. Lucifer aspired to “sit [enthroned] also upon the mount of the congregation,” but God would cast him “out of the mountain of God.” The “king of Babylon” was a heathen, and in heathen mythology the gods held their council meetings on a high mountain, where they determined the affairs of earth. The literal “king of Babylon” (see on Isa. 14:4) would thus presume to usurp the control of the gods—that is, supreme authority—over the affairs of earth. As king of mystical Babylon (see on v. 4) Satan would similarly aspire to control the councils of heaven, that is, to rule the universe of God.

Sides of the north. In Ps. 48:2 Mt. Zion is described as being “on the sides of the north,” that is, to the north of the main part of the city. Anu, foremost of the early gods of Babylon, was supposed to have his throne in the third heaven. His constellation was among the polar stars, around which all others revolved. Heathen mythology often represented the gods as meeting in council on a mountain far to the north. Some think Isaiah made use of this figure in describing the boastful pretensions of Lucifer (v. 12), “king of Babylon” (v. 4). The name Baal-zephon of Ex. 14:2 means literally, “Baal of the north.”

14. Like the most High. Lucifer aspired to be like God in position, power, and glory, but not in character. He desired for himself the homage the angelic host gave to God. Only a created being, he sought honor due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections of the angelic host, he sought for himself first place in those affections.

15. Hell. Heb. *she’ol*, figurative realm of the dead (see on v. 9). From the high estate to which he aspired, Satan would be cast down to the lowest depths, to oblivion (see Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:9). Note the series of striking contrasts in Isa. 14:4–19, between exaltation and utter abasement.

Sides of the pit. Literally, “the most remote parts of the cistern.” Here “pit” is synonymous with *she’ol*, the figurative realm of the dead. This usage of the Heb. *bor*, “pit,” is common in the OT (see Isa. 24:22; Eze. 31:14, 16; etc.)

16. They that see thee. The figure of vs. 9, 10 is repeated. The “dead,” the “chief ones of the earth,” who preceded Lucifer to “the pit” (v. 15), stare incredibly at him when he descends to join them. It should be remembered that this entire section is highly figurative (see on v. 4).

Is this the man? See on v. 10.

17. Destroyed the cities. A literal description of Babylonian conquests (see on vs. 4, 6). When God was about to create this world, Lucifer, the “king” of mystical Babylon (see on v. 4), wanted to be consulted. He thought he could improve upon the handiwork of God, and promised a higher sphere of existence to those who would follow him. But when he did secure control of this world he succeeded only in transforming it into an accursed, desolate waste. Eventually, all will see that Satan has made of the entire world a vast, bleak wilderness in striking contrast with its surpassing beauty as it came from the hand of God (Gen. 1:31). Desolation and death, not life and joy, are the inevitable results of Satan’s rule.

The house of his prisoners. The literal “king of Babylon” (see on v. 4) held his captive peoples in utter subjection. Compare the attitude of the king of Egypt (Ex. 5:2). Now the king of Babylon suffers the same fate he once inflicted upon others. Similarly, Lucifer, king of mystical Babylon, defiantly refuses to release the captives he holds in the prison house of death (Jude 9).

18. His own house. That is, his tomb (see on v. 19). During the 1000 years the wicked will be in their graves, each “in his own house” (see ch. 24:22).

19. Cast out of thy grave. Because of the contempt in which the “king of Babylon” (see on v. 4) was held he would be denied a respectable burial (see 2 Chron. 24:25). During the 1000 years Satan, king of mystical Babylon, experiences a living death. About him are all the wicked dead, but he himself fails to find the peace of death. For him there is no relief from misery and remorse, no release from the horror he has brought upon the earth. He is, as it were, a living corpse for which a common grave would be too honorable an abode. Compare Isa. 14:9–11.

Stones of the pit. Compare v. 15.

20. Not be joined. See on v. 19.

Slain thy people. See on v. 6. When man sinned, Satan became the prince of the world and the ruler of sinful men, but in these thousands of years he has succeeded only in devastating this world and slaying its people. Instead of attaining the honor and glory he so eagerly sought, he has made himself the subject of utter disgrace and shame.

21. Prepare slaughter. That is, for the “children” of the “king of Babylon” (see on v. 4). Compare Joel 3:9–17. Death and destruction are, similarly, to be the final fate of all the “children” of iniquity. Eventually Satan himself and all his evil host will be devoured by flames and reduced to ashes (see Eze. 28:16–18; Mal. 4:1, 3; Rev. 20:9, 10).

For the iniquity. See on Eze. 18:2.

22. Babylon. Both the “king of Babylon” (see on v. 4) and Satan, the “king” of mystical Babylon, exalted themselves (see Dan. 4:30, 37; Isa. 14:13). The name Babylon means “gate of God” (see on Gen. 10:10; 11:9), but it will prove to be the gate of hell. Instead of being a thing of glory literal Babylon will become a thing of shame. Ignominy and reproach, rather than glory and honor, will be its lot. Name and remnant, kith and kin, son and grandson, progeny and posterity, all will be cut off from the once famous

city. Not one inhabitant will remain to pass on its name. So also will it be in the end of time with spiritual Babylon (see Rev. 18:4, 21–23).

Son, and nephew. Literally, “posterity and progeny.”

23. Bittern. Literally, “hedgehog.”

The besom of destruction. That is, “the broom of destruction.” The proud city is compared to offal and filth, which must be swept away. Babylon has defiled the earth, and it has no right to remain where it will continue to offend man and God. The world will be cleaner after this foul rubbish has been swept away. With these words closes “the burden of Babylon.”

24. As I have purposed. The long message against Babylon is followed by a short pronouncement against Assyria (vs. 24–27). Assyria was accustomed to having its own way. By the might of her armies she believed that she could force her will upon all the world. God, however, would teach her that it is His will, not hers, that controls the earth. No purpose contrary to His will can prevail.

25. The Assyrian. These words refer to the time when Sennacherib invaded Judea and dispatched part of his army to besiege Jerusalem. For a time his yoke would be heavy upon the land, but the Lord would eventually break that yoke and grant deliverance to His people.

26. The hand. When Isaiah caught a vision of the greatness of God he also became aware of the insignificance of man. At that time the whole world stood in awe of Assyrian might. But Isaiah saw the Lord as One who had “measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span,” before whom the “nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance” (ch. 40:12, 15). Only the man who is acquainted with God has a clear understanding of the affairs of earth. All the “nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity” (v. 17). To a man who saw God seated upon His eternal throne, Assyria would bring no dark forebodings or fear. In its time of trial, when the heel of Assyria seemed about to crush out its very existence, Judah was much in need of such a message of encouragement as this.

27. Turn it back. Isaiah saw the hand of God stretched out in judgment against Assyria and the other nations of his time, and knew there was no power in heaven or earth that could turn it back. When God purposes to do something His will shall be accomplished, regardless of the will of man (see Num. 23:19; Job 9:12; Isa. 43:13; Dan. 4:32, 35). These words conclude the message against Assyria.

28. In the year. Herewith begins another short prophecy—against Philistia (vs. 28–32). Ahaz died about 715 B.C., and was succeeded by his son Hezekiah as sole ruler.

29. Whole Palestina. That is, Philistia (see on Ex. 15:14).

A cockatrice. That is, an “adder.” From a common serpent would spring forth an even more evil and venomous reptile, and from him, in turn, would spring forth a fiery flying serpent. It was as if the wind would give rise to the whirlwind, or the jackal give birth to a dragon.

30. The poor shall feed. Interwoven with the prophecy of the judgment against Philistia is a promise of prosperity for the poor and unfortunate of Judah. This was to be the work of Christ, the ideal Son of Judah’s king (see Ps. 72:2–4). The “first-born” of the poor are those who inherit a double portion, not of wealth, but of poverty.

Thy root. Out of the root Judah would come forth a King who would save, but the root of Judah's adversary, here mentioned, would be destroyed by famine. Judah might indeed be smitten by her adversaries, but there would be a remnant who would return and be saved (ch. 10:20, 21; see on ch. 7:3). However, the remnant of the enemies of Judah would perish.

He shall slay. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads "I will slay."

31. Whole Palestina. The prophet looked forward to a time when Philistia (see on v. 29) would be no more. The entire nation would be destroyed. As a smoke coming out of the north, some judgment would fall upon Philistia. Babylonian invaders approached Palestine from the north to bring judgments upon the land (Jer. 1:14; 4:6; 6:1, 22; Eze. 1:4) Compare Jer. 47:2, where judgment from the north is again foretold against Philistia, a century later.

A smoke. Probably the smoke of burning towns and villages set afire by an advancing army.

None shall be alone. The entire clause reads literally, "no separateness in his appointments," meaning in this context, "no straggler in his ranks." The enemy would descend together as a unit, without stragglers, and as one man they would fall upon their victim, Philistia.

32. The messengers. Perhaps a royal deputation sent to inquire of the prophet, who now gives his answer. Having delivered his messages of doom against Assyria, Babylon, and Philistia, the natural question would be concerning the fate of Judah. The answer is quickly given, "The Lord hath founded Zion," and Zion therefore has nothing to fear.

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3-6GC 660

4 PK 515

7 GC 673

12 DA 435; GC 669; PP 496; SR 25, 427

12-14CT 32; EW 145; SR 14; 1T 293; 5T 702

12-17GC 659

13, 14 DA 21, 22; GC 494, 504; PP 35

14 DA 435

18-20GC 660

23 Ed 176; PK 533

24-28PK 350

26, 27 Ev 65

CHAPTER 15

The lamentable state of Moab.

1. The burden of Moab. Or, "a solemn message concerning Moab." In chs. 15 and 16 Isaiah delivers a prophecy against Judah's eastern neighbor, Moab. Little is known of the political geography and history of Moab, and therefore much in this prophecy is not clear. Israel and Moab were frequently at war with each other. The famous Moabite Stone, found in the ruins of Dibon in 1868 (see Vol. I, pp. 120, 121; Vol. II, pp. 864, 865), tells of the subjection of Moab by Omri and Ahab and of its successful revolt under its own king, Mesha (see 2 Kings 3:4-7). Such cities as Dibon, Nebo, Medeba, Jahaz (*Yahaş*), and Horonaim (*Hauronen*) mentioned in this prophecy (Isa. 15:2, 4, 5) are also named on

the Moabite Stone. A similar judgment upon Moab, couched in much the same language, is recorded in Jer. 48.

Ar. Heb. 'ar, thought to be a variant of 'ir, meaning "city." No city by the name of Ar is known. Compare "a city of Moab" in Num. 22:36.

2. Dibon. Here the Moabite Stone (see on v. 1) was found. This city is 12 mi. (19 km.) east of the Dead Sea and 3 1/4 mi. (5.2 km.) north of the Arnon. Nebo and Medeba are situated near the northern end of the Dead Sea. On the famous Moabite Stone, King Mesha boasts of having been commanded by Chemosh to take Nebo from Israel, and of having seized the city and slain there 7,000 men, women, and children, whom he devoted to his god. Medeba is mentioned by Mesha as having been taken by Omri and occupied by him and his son Ahab for many years.

Baldness. Heads and beards were shaven in token of profound sorrow. This custom may have had idolatrous significance, since the Israelites were forbidden to practice it (Lev. 19:27; 21:5; Deut. 14:1; cf. Jer. 7:29; 16:6; Eze. 7:18; Micah 1:16).

4. Heshbon. The sound of wailing would be heard still farther to the north. Heshbon (*Tell Hesbân*) is about 6 mi. (9.6 km.) north of Medeba and 15 1/4 mi. (24.5 km.) east-northeast of the mouth of the Jordan. Elealeh was on a hilltop 1.7 mi. (2.7 km.) northeast of Heshbon. When the Israelites first arrived the area fell to Reuben (Num 32:3, 37), but later it was taken over by Moab (see Isa. 16:9; Jer. 48:34). The location of Jahaz is not certain, but it may have been near Medeba. The Israelites defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites, at this place (Num. 21:23, 24; Deut. 2:32, 33; Judges 11:20, 21), and it was assigned to Reuben (Joshua 13:15, 18). According to the Moabite Stone, Jahaz was the headquarters of the Israelites in their struggle against Mesha, but it was captured by Mesha and added to the district of Dibon.

Soldiers of Moab. So terrible is the scourge that comes upon Moab that even the soldiers are stricken with panic and cry out in terror. Those who should help are powerless to do so, those who should be foremost in courage have been filled with terror.

His life shall be grievous. Literally, "his soul shall quiver."

5. My heart. So terrible is the scene pictured to the prophet that his own heart is touched with pity and he cries out in sympathy for the stricken people.

Zoar. This city was probably near the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. It was temporarily spared at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, later destroyed, and then, apparently, rebuilt (see on Gen. 19:22–24, 30).

An heifer of three years old. Possibly, by a reconstruction of the Hebrew text, *Eglath shelishyyah*, "Eglath the third," and if so, a town in the vicinity of Zoar.

Luhith. Compare Jer. 48:5. The site of this city is unknown.

Horonaim. This is mentioned by Mesha on the Moabite Stone (see on v. 1) as a city captured by him upon the directions of Chemosh. It is mentioned again in Jer. 48:3, 5, 34.

6. The waters of Nimrim. Also mentioned in Jer. 48:34, and possibly the site of a reservoir used for purposes of irrigation. It is believed to have been in a wadi emptying into the Dead Sea on its southeastern shore. When the reservoir was ruined, desolation spread throughout the area.

7. Brook of the willows. The desperate situation in Moab caused the inhabitants to flee the country and take up their abode at a place known as the Brook of the Willows. Where this brook may have been located is uncertain.

8. Eglaim. Neither place mentioned in v. 8 has been identified with certainty.

9. The waters of Dimon. This place has not been identified. It is possibly the same as Dibon (v. 2), in which case “the waters” would refer to the Arnon. Some take it as a stream near Madmen.

I will bring more. Great as was the judgment of blood, other judgments were to follow. The lion is possibly a symbol for later invaders (see Jer. 4:7; 5:6).

CHAPTER 16

1 Moab is exhorted to yield obedience to Christ's kingdom. 6 Moab is threatened for her pride. 9 The prophet bewaileth her. 12 The judgment of Moab.

1. Send ye the lamb. When Moab had been subdued by Omri and Ahab, tribute was paid to Israel in the form of lambs and rams (2 Kings 3:4). Now Moab was called upon to send a similar tribute to Judah.

From Sela. See on 2 Kings 14:7; cf. Jer. 48:28. Sela means “rock,” and is thought to have been the name of the capital of Edom. The people of Moab had been forced to leave their cities and flee to the wilderness and make their homes in the rocks. Now, in their desolate condition, they are called upon to acknowledge the supremacy of “the mount of the daughter of Zion” by the payment of tribute.

2. A wandering bird. Or, “a fleeing bird,” or “a stray bird,” a graphic illustration of the fugitives of Moab, who knew not which way to turn for safety.

3. Take counsel. Some think these words are addressed to Zion by the Moabites, who had been forced to leave their country; others, counsel given by the prophet to the humbled people of Moab. The latter seems to be the more likely. Having brought judgment upon Moab, the Lord now counsels its stricken inhabitants as to the course they ought to pursue. Henceforth they should deal justly and practice mercy toward their neighbors. In the day of Judah's calamity the people of Moab took delight in the tribulation that had overtaken God's people (see Jer. 48:27; Zeph 2:8). Now the Lord admonishes them to show kindness to Judah, and not to take advantage of exiles forced to seek refuge in Moab. As with the shadows of night, they were to hide the fleeing fugitives and not to betray (“bewray”) them to their pursuers.

4. Dwell with thee. Moab is admonished to permit the outcasts from Judah to find refuge in her midst and to hide them from those who would seek their destruction. This message was given to Moab a century before the Babylonians brought judgment upon Judah, when thousands of Jews sought refuge in Moab (Jer. 40:11). At that time, however, this counsel was not heeded, and the Moabites took keen delight in the miseries that had come upon Judah (Jer. 48:26, 27). For this reason a terrible judgment was to fall upon Moab (Zeph. 2:8, 9).

5. In mercy. The words of v. 4, an admonition to Moab, are also appropriate to the kingdom of Christ. The prophet seems to look forward to a time when a representative of the house of David, the Messiah (see on ch. 11:1), will govern Moab. It is mercy, not cruelty, that brings security, peace, and prosperity to the peoples of earth. If Moab will be merciful, its throne will be established; if not, the nation is doomed. It was because the Lord “heard the reproach of Moab” against His people that He declared, “Surely Moab shall be as Sodom,” and announced that He would be “terrible unto them” (Zeph. 2:8, 9, 11).

6. The pride of Moab. Pride and arrogancy were outstanding weakness of Moab and primary reasons for its destruction (see Jer. 48:29; Zeph. 2:10).

His lies. Literally, “his idle talk,” “his boasting.” Compare Jer. 48:30. The boasts of Moab were false, and would be proved to be altogether in vain.

7. Moab howl. Had Moab given heed to the counsel of the Lord, its throne would have been established in righteousness and mercy, but since it refused, the result would be woe and destruction. The whole nation would wail in agony at the arrival of the hour of doom.

The foundations. Literally, “raisin cakes.” In Hosea 3:1 the same word is translated “flagons of wine” (see on 2 Sam. 6:19; S. of Sol. 2:5). Perhaps pressed cakes of raisins had been one of the chief products of Kir-hareseth, and the people here bemoan the loss of their chief means of livelihood.

8. Heshbon. See on ch. 15:4.

Sibmah. This city was assigned to Reuben (Num. 32:37, 38; Joshua 13:15, 19) and was famous for its grapes (Jer. 48:32). The vines of this beautiful and prosperous country were destroyed by the cruel invaders. The city of Sibmah was near Heshbon, its location uncertain. The figure of the branches of Moabite grapevines reaching out in various directions probably suggests the places to which the product of its vines was exported, in the form of raisin cakes.

Unto Jazer. That is, the branches of the flourishing vine of Heshbon and Sibmah reached northward even unto Jazer, a city on the northern frontier (west or northwest of Rabbath-ammon), originally in Gilead (Num. 32:1, 3, 35; 2 Sam. 24:5; 1 Chron. 26:31). They stretched eastward into the Arabian Desert, and westward they crossed the Dead Sea to reappear on the slopes of En-gedi (S. of Sol. 1:14). The words of Isaiah picture the flourishing and extensive vineyards of Heshbon and Sibmah as constituting a single vine reaching out in all directions (see Jer. 48:32).

9. For the shouting. The last part of v. 9 reads, literally, “for upon thy summer fruits and upon thy harvest a shout has fallen.” In times of peace and prosperity this would be the joyous shout of the harvesters, but in a time of war (see on v. 7) it would be the shout of the invader as he took possession of the harvest and destroyed the trees and vines. The Targums read, “a despoiler has fallen.” The prophet joins with the inhabitants of Moab in weeping over their miseries.

10. Gladness. Harvesttime in the fields and vineyards was a period of unrestrained joy and celebration. Instead, tears were to take the place of laughter.

11. Bowels. Considered by the Hebrews to be the seat of the emotions (see on Gen. 43:30). Here the emotions are pictured as vibrating like the plaintive chords of a lyre sounding a funeral dirge. The prophet sympathizes with the people against whom he testifies.

12. Moab is weary. When Moab presents himself at the high place of his god, even though he wearies himself with incantations and prayers, Chemosh will not answer (see 1 Kings 18:26–29).

13. Since that time. Literally, “from then,” a Hebrew idiom meaning “formerly,” “of old,” “in the past.” In ch. 48:3, 5, 7, it is translated “from the beginning,” and in 2 Sam. 15:34, “hitherto.” The meaning here is that Isaiah’s message is but a repetition of earlier messages that had been given.

14. Within three years. Previous pronouncements of judgment against Moab had been indefinite as to time.

The years of an hireling. A hireling works only so long as his contract requires. He is not likely to remain beyond that time. Thus it will be with the judgment soon to fall upon Moab. A time has been set for that judgment, and judgment is not likely to be postponed.

Very small and feeble. Moab was not to be completely destroyed. A remnant would be left, but that remnant would be small and weak.

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3, 4 MH 188

CHAPTER 17

1 *Syria and Israel are threatened.* 6 *A remnant shall forsake idolatry.* 9 *The rest shall be plagued for their impiety.* 12 *The woe of Israel's enemies.*

1. *The burden of Damascus.* See on ch. 13:1. Verses 1–11 constitute a message against Damascus and Israel. It will be recalled that in the days of Ahaz, Syria was united with Israel in an alliance against Judah, and that Isaiah had foretold the defeat of both Syria and Israel (ch. 7:1–16). The present prophecy deals with more extensive judgments.

From being a city. A severe blow was to fall upon Damascus; it would no longer be numbered among the great cities of the world. For a time the city seems to have lain in ruins, but was eventually rebuilt, for a century later Jeremiah delivered further messages against it (Jer. 49:23–27).

2. *The cities of Aroer.* No district by this name is known in Syria, although there was such a city in Israelite territory, east of the Jordan (Num. 32:34; Deut. 2:36; 3:12; Joshua 13:25; 2 Sam. 24:5). Probably to avoid this seeming difficulty, or perhaps following another Hebrew text, the LXX reads, “Her cities will be forsaken forever.” The cities within the territory designated would be so completely destroyed that flocks would henceforth graze in the confines of what once had been flourishing cities.

3. *From Ephraim.* Ephraim (the northern kingdom, Israel) is still linked with Syria in the mind of the prophet. As the two nations had been united in a common attack upon Judah (2 Kings 16:5; Isa. 7:1, 2), so they were to suffer from a common judgment decreed by the Lord (see on Isa. 7:4, 7, 16).

The glory. The glory of Israel was an ephemeral thing, soon to pass away. Thus it would also be with the remnant of Syria.

4. *Jacob.* Here evidently meaning Ephraim, the northern kingdom. The ten tribes would suffer extinction. This message must, therefore, have been delivered prior to 723/722 B.C., when the northern kingdom came to its end (see Vol. II, pp. 85, 160).

5. *The harvestman.* The figure now changes to that of a harvester reaping “corn” (grain; see on Lev. 2:14) in the field. Similarly, the cities of Israel would be cut down by the cruel Assyrian invader.

The valley of Rephaim. This was the stony but fertile “valley of the giants” south of Jerusalem, in the direction of Bethlehem (see on Joshua 15:8).

6. *Gleaning grapes.* Heb. *‘oleloth*, the “gleaning,” either of grapes or of olives, but not of grain. Here reference is to the gleaning of an olive tree, as the remainder of the verse makes plain. The idea is once more of a remnant that will escape the general destruction, this time in Israel. Even though judgment would come and the nation as a whole would suffer a devastating blow, a few of the people would escape, like the olives in the topmost branch of a tree after the branches have been violently shaken. This concept of a remnant remaining appears again and again throughout the book of Isaiah, as in chs. 10:20–22; 11:11, 16; 37:4, 32. The “remnant” is always the group that survives a

time of divine retribution upon Judah for its transgressions. Presumably, the remnant has learned obedience and can be counted on to remain true to God.

7. Look to his Maker. The judgment would not be in vain, for it would cause the earnest and sincere to lift up their eyes to God. The outstanding message to the people in Isaiah's day was, "Behold your God!" (ch. 40:9). It might take bitter disappointment and disaster to turn the eyes of men away from the things of earth, but the Lord's judgments would finally cause them to look away from their idols to their Creator.

8. His fingers have made. That is, the idols (see Deut. 4:28; Isa. 2:8; 31:7; 37:19; Hosea 14:3; Micah 5:13). The heathen looked for help to the gods that they themselves had made; the Hebrews found their help in the God who was their Maker.

10. The rock. God is the true defense of His people (Ps. 28:1; 31:2; 62:2; 71:3; 89:26; 95:1). Having forsaken the Lord, the people would vainly seek protection by means of idolatrous rites.

Pleasant plants. These were plants such as wheat, barley, or various kinds of vegetables or flowers, planted in baskets and pots and caused to germinate rapidly. They were regarded as symbolizing the magic power of the gods of fertility. Powerful though these nature deities were considered to be, they actually possessed no strength, and could do nothing for their worshipers.

Strange slips. Literally, "shoots," or "twigs," of "strange [gods]," or "illicit [gods]" (see Ps. 44:20; 81:9), perhaps budding shoots used in a way similar to the "pleasant plants."

11. The harvest. From these rapidly growing plants there could be no extensive harvest. As the plants sprang forth rapidly, they would as rapidly wither away. The thought seems to be that the people, having forsaken God, their real strength, would seek in vain for strength from their fertility gods. These deities would leave them with nought but a harvest of grief and disappointment in the day of danger and defeat.

12. Many people. The power against whom this woe is pronounced is not designated by name. However, it was some enemy of God's people that was to come against them like the waters of a mighty flood, threatening to overwhelm them completely. Such a prophecy had been given concerning Assyria (ch. 8:7, 8), and this empire may be the power referred to here.

13. God shall rebuke them. Although the Assyrian armies under Sennacherib threatened to completely inundate Judah, the Lord intervened (see ch. 37:36). Instead of overwhelming Israel, the enemy would himself be overwhelmed.

The chaff of the mountains. The symbols used here aptly express the utter weakness and insignificance of the Assyrian armies before the power of God. One moment they were sweeping onward like the rushing waters of a mighty sea, threatening to overwhelm the land of Judah; the next, they would be like chaff or thistledown driven before the wind.

A rolling thing. Literally, "wheel," but here supposed to refer to the wheel-shaped dried calyx of the thistle *Gundelia tournefortii*.

14. Before the morning. The night that for Zion began with darkness and trouble ended with victory and rejoicing (see ch. 37:22–36).

That spoil us. According to Sennacherib's records he had taken away a heavy spoil from Judah on the occasion of his first invasion (see Vol. II, p. 64).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

CHAPTER 18

1 *God in care of his people will destroy the Ethiopians. 7 An access thereby shall grow unto the church.*

1. *The land shadowing with wings.* Literally, “the land of winged crickets,” or “the land of whirring wings.” The Heb. *šilṣal*, “crickets” (not “shadowing”), is translated “locust” in Deut. 28:42 and “cymbals” in 2 Sam. 6:5; Ps. 150:5. Ethiopia (see on Gen. 10:6) is here referred to. A popular Egyptian emblem was a sun disk with outstretched wings. In this chapter and the next, Ethiopia and Egypt are grouped together. The Twenty-fifth Dynasty governed all Egypt from about 715 to 663 B.C., when Egypt was ruled by a line of “Ethiopian” (actually Nubian) kings (see Vol. II, pp. 52, 53). Taharka, who held the throne from about 690 to 664, was the Tirhakah (2 Kings 19:9) whose intervention in Judea Sennacherib expected to meet. As the “Ethiopians” swept up from what is now the Sudan and extended their rule over all Egypt, and as they threatened the hosts of Assyria, who were then invading Judea, those of the Israelites who were wont to place their trust in men and horses rather than in God, turned to Ethiopia for help. The Lord wanted His people to realize that their real defense was to be found in Him rather than in the forces of Egypt. After all, the Egyptians were only men, and wicked men at that; now it was their turn to have a woe pronounced upon them. It was better to trust under the wings of the Almighty (Ps. 17:8; 57:1; 91:4) than under the whirring wings of Egypt. Egypt might appear formidable, but her strength would fail when God pronounced His woe upon her (see on Isa. 19:1).

2. *That sendeth ambassadors.* These ambassadors seem to have been sent to invite Judah to join the Egyptians in an alliance against Assyria.

The sea. Here thought to refer to the Nile. Broad rivers such as the Nile and the Euphrates seem to have been referred to thus (see Isa. 19:5; Isa. 21:1; Nahum 3:8), as they are in modern Arabic. On the Nile, ships made of papyrus reeds woven and lashed together were used.

Go, ye swift messengers. The Hebrew of the remainder of v. 2 is uncertain, and many different suggestions have been made as to how it should be translated. However, Isaiah seems to be advising Ethiopia, or Egypt, that in sending ambassadors to Judah it sent them to a nation that was scattered and stricken as a result of war. The Assyrian invasions have devastated the country, overwhelming it as with a flood (see ch. 8:7, 8) and leaving it spoiled and trodden down. The Egyptians would gain nothing from the proposed alliance with Judah, nor, for that matter, would Egypt be able to help Judah.

3. *All ye inhabitants.* All peoples are to learn that the Lord is in control of the affairs of earth (see on Dan. 4:17, 37). It is God who ordains the affairs of nations. Figuratively speaking, it is He who lifts up a signal (see Isa. 5:26) on the mountaintops of earth, directing the nations as to what they may and may not do.

4. *I will take my rest.* Verse 4 presents a striking picture of the calm and unhurried way in which the Lord works out His will among the nations (see Ed 173). His eye is over everything, and His hand is in control. With calm deliberation He sends forth judgment or blessing, treating all peoples in accord with His infinite wisdom and justice. Nothing may happen without His knowledge; no judgment may fall without His permission. When the ripening grain is ready to harvest He sends forth His reapers to accomplish their mission.

5. Take away and cut down. Isaiah's description of the work of the divine reapers continues (see Matt. 13:39; Rev. 14:14–20). The earth is a vast harvest field. When, in His infinite wisdom, the Lord sees that a nation is ripe for destruction He sends forth His reapers to cut it down (see Dan. 4:13–15; 5:25–31).

6. Left together unto the fowls. When the Lord has done His work and a nation has received its divine chastisement, it is as if the sprigs and branches have been cut off, to be ruthlessly scattered and left to the beasts of the earth and the fowls of the air.

7. Present be brought. Upon its destruction a nation is pictured as an offering, or “present,” unto the Lord. War would bring suffering, desolation, and woe. The nation of Judah would be stricken, scattered, trodden under foot, and spoiled by their enemies, but the final outcome would be a new nation that would recognize the Lord and serve Him.

CHAPTER 19

1 *The confusion of Egypt.* 11 *The foolishness of their princes.* 18 *The calling of Egypt to the church.* 23 *The covenant of Egypt, Assyria, and Israel.*

1. The burden of Egypt. This is the title of ch. 19. For the word “burden” see on ch. 13:1. This chapter may be considered a continuation of ch. 18, for at this time Ethiopia (Nubia) and Egypt were one, Egypt being ruled by a series of Ethiopian kings (see on ch. 18:1). However, the picture here is in striking contrast with that presented in ch. 18. Here, God is represented as riding “upon a swift cloud,” bringing judgment upon that unhappy land. Figuratively speaking, even the gods of Egypt would tremble before the God of heaven.

2. The Egyptians against. This is an accurate description of the sort of debacle that so frequently meant defeat to the Egyptians. Had the Egyptians held together, no nation of antiquity could have defeated them. On the south they were protected by the cataracts of the Nile, on the west and east by the sands of the desert, and on the north by the sea. Their natural defenses were ideal. But the Egyptians proved to be their own worst enemies. Internal unrest and dissension led to weakness and ruin. When Egyptians turned against Egyptians, as they frequently did, with local rulers rising up in various parts of the land and endeavoring to secure the supremacy over their fellows, the result was at least anarchy and chaos, and sometimes conquest by a foreign foe. Later, the Egyptian rulers hired foreign mercenaries to protect them from other Egyptians, with the result that the Greeks began to exercise considerable influence in Egyptian affairs. Finally, in 525, Cambyses of Persia marched into Egypt and was crowned the first Pharaoh of the Twenty-seventh Dynasty. The days of Egyptian greatness and independence had come to an end.

3. Destroy the counsel. By confounding the Egyptians in their plans the Lord brought them low. They sought to their idols for direction and wisdom, but the result was only increased confusion and folly, which hastened the nation on to its doom.

4. A cruel lord. These words do not necessarily refer to any single ruler, for there were many rulers who could qualify. They may refer to Assyria as a nation rather than to a single king; and later, to Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, Roman, Arabian, or British control over the unhappy land of Egypt. In their pride and splendor the Egyptians had turned completely against the counsel of the Lord, who now permitted them to fall under the control of tyrants.

5. The sea. Here probably used of the Nile (see on ch. 18:2). Egypt was dependent upon the Nile for its very existence. Whenever the Nile was too low to flow into the

irrigation canals, economic disaster followed (see on Gen. 41:34). A very low Nile would leave the arteries of the whole irrigation system completely dry.

6. *They shall turn.* The first clause reads literally, “The rivers [probably the Nile Delta complex and the irrigation canals] shall stink.”

Brooks of defence. Literally, “rivers of Egypt.” The word for “river” here used is *ye’or* (see on Gen. 41:1).

7. *Shall wither.* The Nile made Egypt (see on Gen. 41:34). Herodotus commented that Egypt was the “gift of the Nile.” When the Nile was low, the growth along the margins withered (v. 6) and the crops sown beside the river or its irrigation canals dried up.

8. *The fishers.* Fishing was one of the important occupations of Egypt. With low water the fish supply would be restricted and the Egyptians would be deprived of one of the important items upon which they depended for food.

Angle. Heb. *chakkah*, “fishhook.”

9. *Fine flax.* The production of linen was also an important occupation in Egypt. The picture here presented is of the failure of the linen industry, which is perhaps inclusive here, figuratively, of all industry.

Networks. Literally, “white [stuff],” probably meaning “white cotton” (see on Esther 1:6). Compare the use of the word “purple,” meaning “purple cloth” (see on Esther 1:6; cf. Acts 16:14).

10. *Purposes.* The same word is translated “foundations” in Ps. 11:3. If that is its sense here, the thought is that the “foundations” of Egyptian life and industry are to be crushed, perhaps meaning that “those who are the pillars of the land will be crushed” (RSV). All classes would suffer from a severe drought. The scene is one of grievous judgment, which will fall upon all.

All that make sluices. The KJV translation of the last clause of v. 10 is based upon the Jewish Targums and the Latin Vulgate. The literal reading of the consonantal Hebrew text (see Vol. I, pp. 25, 26) is, “all hired laborers will be troubled.”

11. *The princes of Zoan.* Zoan was called Tanis by the Greeks. The city was founded seven years after Hebron (Num. 13:22). It was situated in the Delta, on one of the eastern branches of the Nile. This city became the capital of Ramses II during the 13th century B.C. A century after the time of Isaiah, the prophet Ezekiel pronounced a severe judgment upon the city (Eze. 30:14).

12. *Hath purposed.* While the idolatrous councilors of Pharaoh were planning and predicting great things for Egypt, Isaiah revealed the Lord’s intention to lay the country low. Had the so-called wise men of Egypt been wise, they would have endeavored to ascertain the will of the Lord and to counsel the nation to follow His ways (see ch. 47:13–15).

13. *The princes of Noph.* Or, Memphis. See Jer. 46:19 and Eze. 30:13, where the Lord decrees judgment upon this Egyptian capital and its idols. This was one of the chief royal cities in Lower Egypt, and the first main point of attack when Assyrian armies invaded the country.

14. *A perverse spirit.* Literally, “a spirit of wavering,” that is, of uncertainty, not of wisdom. All true wisdom proceeds from God. The leaders of Egypt became foolish, and found themselves in a state of utter confusion. Their perversity and confusion came not

from God but from their refusal to walk in His ways. In their uncertainty and vacillation they became as staggering drunkards, loathsome and pitiful to behold.

15. *The head or tail.* That is, all classes of people, proud leaders and the lowly poor alike. In their confusion and distress they could accomplish nothing.

16. *Like unto women.* The picture is one of terror and dismay, of weakness and panic. The manhood of Egypt would fail, and the people would become as timorous as women.

17. *A terror unto Egypt.* Judah was one of the weakest nations in the ancient East, and Egypt one of the strongest. But when the Lord would bring His judgments upon Egypt its self-confidence would be lost. Egypt rejected the counsel of the Lord, but eventually its people would stand in awe and terror before those who honored and served Him. Events would come to such a pass that the wicked would recognize the hand of God stretched out against them for evil.

18. *In that day.* That is, when Egypt has learned the folly and futility of opposition to the will of God (v. 17). Compare the same expression in Isa. 2:11, 17; 4:2; 26:1; 29:18; 52:6; Joel 3:18; Zech. 2:11; 9:16; 12:8; 13:1; 14:4, 9; Mal. 3:17. “In that day” appears to be a technical expression of the prophets in regard to the time when God reveals Himself to the nations and sets up the Messianic kingdom. The remainder of Isa. 19 (vs. 18–25) constitutes a conditional prophecy of the time when, according to God’s original plan for the evangelization of the world (see pp. 29, 34), the Egyptians should come to a knowledge of the true God and should serve Him as the Hebrew people did (see v. 25).

Five cities. Either five specific but unnamed cities (Heliopolis, Leontopolis, Elephantine, Daphnae, and Memphis have been suggested) or simply a round number. From among the heathen Egyptians, who had long rejected the message of God’s grace, many would turn to the Lord and learn the “language” and ways of God’s people (see p. 29). In Zeph. 3:8–10 a similar picture is presented (see also Zech. 14:16–19).

Swear. That is, swear an oath of allegiance to the Lord, acknowledging Him as the true God.

The city of destruction. Heb. *‘ir haheres*, literally, “the city of the destruction.” Fifteen Hebrew manuscripts, the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs, Symmachus’ version of the LXX, the Vulgate, and the Arabic read *‘ir hacheres*, or its equivalent, “the city of the sun.” The name of the Egyptian city of Heliopolis means “City of the Sun.” Heliopolis is the Greek name for the city of On, mentioned in Gen. 41:45, 50. It was situated near the eastern bank of the Nile, 19 mi. north of Memphis (Noph; see Isa. 19:13), and almost due west of the northern end of the Gulf of Suez. Jeremiah (Jer. 43:13) refers to the city as Beth-shemesh, Hebrew for “House of the Sun.” This city was the center of sun worship. If the reading *‘ir hacheres* is correct, Isaiah is commenting on the fact that of the “five cities” that “swear to the Lord of hosts” one would be the City of the Sun, the erstwhile center of Egyptian sun worship.

19. *An altar to the Lord.* Two Hebrew temples were later erected in Egypt, one at Elephantine, built before 525 B.C. and destroyed in 410, and the other at Leontopolis in the Delta, near Memphis, built in response to the petition of Onias to Ptolemy Philometor and Cleopatra about 150 B.C. However, it is highly improbable that either of these temples is here referred to. The prediction of vs. 18–25 is strictly conditional (see on v. 18). The time never came when the Egyptians swore allegiance to the true God (v. 18).

and became His people (v. 25). This prediction was never fulfilled, partly because Israel proved unfaithful to the sacred trust committed to her (see pp. 30–34). Had Israel been faithful, men from all nations, including Egypt, would have turned to the Lord (see Zech. 14:16–19). Centers for the worship of the true God would have replaced those in which heathen gods had been worshiped. The prophet foresaw a time when the world would turn to the Lord and serve Him. As a result of Israel's failure, however, this conditional prophecy could not be fulfilled. Nevertheless, in the earth made new all the nations of the saved will worship the Lord (Isa. 11:9; Isa 45:22, 23; Dan. 7:27).

20. *Send them a saviour.* The conditional prophecy continues (see on v. 18).

A great one. Heb. *rab*, whence the word *rabbi*, meaning “my great one.” The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads *yrd*, which might be either from *radah*, “to rule,” “to dominate,” or from *yarad*, “to descend,” “to come down.” In the first case the last part of v. 20 would read, “he will rule and deliver them,” and in the latter, “he will descend and deliver them.” The latter is the more probable.

21. *Shall know the Lord.* “In that day” (v. 18). The blessings of the gospel would not be the exclusive possession of Israel (see pp. 28–30).

22. *Smite and heal.* Isaiah's message to Egypt opened with a prophecy of judgment and doom (vs. 1–17). But the Lord is a God of mercy. He smites in order that He may heal. God's object in sending judgments is not destruction, but restoration, for Egypt as well as for Judah.

23. *Egypt to Assyria.* Isaiah foresaw the day when Egypt and Assyria would worship the Lord (see on v. 18). The nations would live together in peace and brotherhood, happy to serve the Lord. This prophecy will find its fulfillment in the earth made new, when all will know Him, “from the least of them unto the greatest of them” (Jer. 31:34; cf. Isa. 11:16; 35:8).

Serve. That is, “worship.”

25. *Egypt my people.* The Israelites had come to look upon themselves as being the Lord's people exclusively. They forgot that He was the God of all the earth and that He desired all nations to be saved. Isaiah here points out to the people of Israel their opportunities and responsibilities. The time was to come when heathen Assyria, as well as Egypt, would know God. Hosea had a similar vision (Hosea 1:10).

CHAPTER 20

A type prefiguring the shameful captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia.

1. *Tartan.* Literally, “the commander,” tartan being the title of the commander in chief of the Assyrian armies, not his personal name. In the annals of the 11th year of Sargon (711 B.C.) it is recorded that Azuri, king of Ashdod, revolted against Assyria, and that Sargon promptly sent an army, deposed Azuri, and set his younger brother Ahimiti upon the throne of Ashdod. The Ashdodites, however, refused to accept the Assyrian appointee and set a Greek adventurer upon the throne instead. According to Sargon's annals, other Philistine cities, with Judah, Edom, and Moab, joined in the struggle against Assyria, and an appeal asking him to be their ally was sent to “Pir'u [Pharaoh?] king of Musru [Egypt?], a potentate, [who was] unable to save them.” When Sargon attacked Ashdod, the Greek usurper fled “into the territory of Musru, which belongs to Ethiopia,” and an Assyrian was made governor. The distant king of Ethiopia was stricken with terror

at Sargon's advance, and quickly took steps to make his peace with Assyria, putting the Greek in fetters and sending him to the land of Assyria.

Sargon. For many years the only available reference to this important Assyrian king was the statement here made. Skeptics previously challenged the historical accuracy of this text, but during the course of his excavations at Khorsabad in the years 1843 to 1845, however, Botta discovered the palace of Sargon, together with its famous inscriptions that deal with the history of this important king.

2. Loose the sackcloth. Sackcloth is usually worn in mourning, and to loose the sackcloth is therefore a figure of joy (Ps. 30:11). But in this instance sackcloth seems to have been the distinctive dress of Isaiah as a camel's-hair garment was of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:4) and the leather girdle was of Elijah (2 Kings 1:8).

Naked. See on 1 Sam. 19:24. The word '*arom*,' "naked," may mean either completely naked or only half clad. Here, as in Isa. 58:7; Eze. 18:7, 16; Micah 1:8, the latter meaning is indicated. Isaiah laid aside his outer garment and wore only his inner garments, a common practice in the Orient even today, particularly with laboring men. The act was to betoken humiliation, deprivation, and shame.

3. Three years. Whether Isaiah wore this garb continuously for three years, or only at various intervals during a period of three years, to keep the forthcoming humiliation of Egypt before the people, is not certain.

4. Lead away the Egyptians. Sargon has left no record of an invasion of Egypt, but if "Musru," where the Greek usurper fled, was Egypt (see on v. 1), it is likely that many of the Egyptians who had taken part in the movement against Assyria were likewise sent to Assyria in humiliation, as here pictured. However, in the reigns of Esarhaddon (681–699) and of Ashurbanipal (669–627?) Egypt was, on several occasions, invaded by the Assyrian armies, and many captives, even of the royal seed, were taken to Assyria.

6. Isle. Heb. 'i, "isle," or, as used here, "coastland." The peoples of the entire Palestinian seaboard, including Philistia and Phoenicia, and possibly Cyprus, had taken part in the anti-Assyrian revolt, but were ruthlessly suppressed. They discovered, to their sorrow, that not even with the help of Egypt and Ethiopia could the might of Assyria be resisted.

Flee. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads "rely [for support]." Whichever reading is accepted, the meaning is the same.

CHAPTER 21

5

1 *The prophet, bewailing the captivity of his people, seeth in a vision the fall of Babylon by the Medes and Persians.* 11 *Edom, scorning the prophet, is moved to repentance.* 13 *The set time of Arabia's calamity.*

1. The burden. See on ch. 13:1.

The desert of the sea. The nation against which this solemn message is directed, though not expressly named in the title, is obviously Babylon (see vs. 2, 9; PK 531; cf. v.

⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 12:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

4). The LXX omits “of the sea.” Isaiah seems to compare the endless wastes of the wilderness to the sea. Some have translated this expression as “sandy wastes.”

It cometh. It is not clear whether this refers to “the burden,” or whether it should be translated “he cometh,” with reference to the Elamite-Median invasion of Babylon (see v. 2). The latter seems more probable, for in v. 2 the Elamites and Medians are told to “go up.” If so, this invasion is compared to a whirlwind coming out of the south (Heb. *negeb*; see on Gen. 12:9), and the land of Elam-Media would be the “terrible land” to which Isaiah refers.

2. A grievous vision. Before the prophet’s gaze appeared a stern, sobering vision of a plundering power engaged in treachery, violence, and destruction. This was Babylon (see ch. 14:4, 6), “the treacherous dealer.” Elam and Media were called to go up against it and bring to an end the sighing and misery it had caused.

3. I was dismayed. The scene of destruction presented to the prophet is so horrible that he finds himself completely overwhelmed.

4. My heart panted. That is, “my mind became confused,” or “my mind staggered.”

The night of my pleasure. The prophet’s fright reflects that of Belshazzar and the Babylonians on the night of their riotous feasting (see v. 5), which Isaiah saw in this “grievous vision” (v. 2; see PK 531).

5. Prepare the table. See Dan. 5:1–4; Jer. 51:39. Riotous festivity marked the night of Babylon’s fall to the armies of Media and Persia.

Watch in the watchtower. Heb. *saphoh haššaphith*, literally, “arrange the order [of the seats],” that is, of the carpets or couches on which to recline at the feast.

6. Set a watchman. Isaiah was first shown the approaching Elamite-Median host (v. 2), then the feasting Babylonians (vs. 4, 5), and now the entrance of the invading hordes into the city (vs. 6–9). The prophet identifies himself with a watchman on the walls of Babylon prior to its fall, and as a watchman he reports what he sees.

7. A couple of horsemen. Probably, “horsemen in pairs” (RSV). Isaiah sees the enemy advancing to the attack.

8. A lion. Heb. *’aryeh*. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads *hr’h* (*ha’roeh*), “the one seeing,” or “the seer.” The statement would then read, “The one seeing [that is, the “watchman” of v. 6] cried.” The reading of the Dead Sea scroll accords better with the context.

9. He answered and said. The watchman is still speaking. He does not “answer” someone who has addressed him, however. According to Hebrew idiomatic usage a person may speak in response to a situation, or, as here, express his reaction to what he has observed. Such a response is commonly spoken of as answering (see Matt. 11:25; Matt. 17:4, 17; see on Job 3:2).

Babylon is fallen. This is the climax of the scene the prophet has related (see on v. 6). Its idols have been humbled in the dust; they have failed to protect the proud capital (Jer. 50:2; 51:17, 18, 47, 52; cf. Isa. 47:13–15). Compare Jer. 51:8; Rev. 14:8; 18:2.

10. Threshing. The text reads literally, “my threshed one, my son of the threshing-floor.” In Scripture a time of judgment is often likened to reaping (see Isa. 41:15; Jer. 51:33; Amos 1:3; Micah 4:13; Hab. 3:12; Matt. 13:39; Rev. 14:14–20).

11. The burden of Dumah. See on ch. 13:1. For Dumah the LXX has Edom. Dumah was one of the descendants of Ishmael (Gen. 25:14; 1 Chron. 1:30). Since the prophecy mentions Mt. Seir, some would place Dumah in Edom, but no Edomite town by this

name is known. Hence, some take Dumah as a symbolic name for Edom. However, there was a Dumah in the Arabian Desert, east of Edom, and this could conceivably be connected with the Ishmaelites.

Watchman. See on v. 6.

What of the night? Literally, “What from the night?” probably meaning, “What time of night is it?” (see 6T 407). Some in Edom inquire urgently and insistently of the prophet what the tidings are. The hour is one of darkness and danger, and they are anxious to know when the morning will come, bringing relief from anxiety and fear.

12. The morning cometh. The answer of the watchman is mysterious and bodes ill. He gives no definite reply, but simply says that though morning may come, night will again follow. There is little of light or hope to look forward to. The hours ahead are dark, gloomy, and uncertain. Such was to be the future history of the unhappy land of Edom, to be trodden under foot by a succession of conquerors and ultimately reduced to an altogether desolate state. God’s watchmen upon the walls of Zion today should be ready to give an answer to those who inquire what hour of earth’s long night it is, and when the dawn of eternal day may be expected (see GC 632).

If ye will enquire. These words presuppose an anxious desire to know the meaning of the cryptic answer of the watchman. He has declined to give them a definite reply, and they remain in darkness. If they desire to ask again, that is their privilege. But there is no assurance that a second inquiry will be more fruitful than the first.

13. The burden upon Arabia. See on ch. 13:1. This is another cryptic prophecy. Caravans of Dedanites were to pass the night in the thickets of the Arabian Desert. From Jer. 49:7, 8 it would seem that the Dedanites dwelt in the neighborhood of Tema, south of Dumah and southeast of Edom. Dedan was famous as a trading center (Eze. 27:15, 20). In Jer. 25:23, 24, both Dedan and Tema are mentioned in connection with “the kings of Arabia” and the “people that dwell in the desert.” Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel had messages of doom for Dedan (Jer. 49:8; Eze. 25:13). Dedan has been identified with the oasis of *el-‘Ula* in northern Hejaz.

14. The land of Tema. In Gen. 25:13–15 and 1 Chron. 1:29, 30, Tema and Dumah are listed as descendants of Ishmael. Tema is situated in the Arabian Desert, about 165 mi. (264.5 km.) south-southwest of Dumah, about 300 mi. (480 km.) east of the point of the Sinai Peninsula.

Brought water. Literally, “bring ye water.” The words indicate the plight of the Dedanites (v. 13), who had been forced to flee from the enemy without provisions. Their neighbors, the Temanites, were called upon to take pity on them in their famished condition.

Prevented. Literally, “met.” When the KJV was translated, the word “prevent” had the meaning “meet,” or “precede.”

16. A year. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “three years.”

The years of an hireling. See on ch. 16:14. A hireling would not work more than the time that had been bargained for. The meaning is that the fall of Kedar would not be delayed. Within a year the specified judgment was certain to fall.

Kedar. In Genesis, Kedar is listed as an Ishmaelite tribe, as are also Dumah and Tema (Gen. 25:13–15). But elsewhere Kedar seems to be a general term for nomadic peoples of the Arabian Desert (Ps. 120:5; S. of Sol. 1:5; cf. Isa. 42:11; 60:7; Jer. 2:10). Isaiah proclaims an extensive judgment to fall within a year upon all the desert region of

northern Arabia. Tiglath-pileser III declares that he inflicted a sore judgment upon Samsi, an Arabian queen, that he slew 1,100 of her people and took 30,000 of her camels and 20,000 head of cattle. Sargon likewise claims to have received tribute from the Arabian queen in the form of gold dust, ivory, horses, and camels, and he also claims to have subdued other Arabian tribes who had never before paid tribute. The exact year, however, of the judgment specified is not known.

17. Residue. Heb. *she'ar*, “remnant” (see chs. 10:20, 21, 22; 11:11, 16; 14:22; 16:14; 17:3). When Sargon struck down the distant Arab tribes of Tamud, Ibadidi, Marsimanu, and Haiapa, he declares he deported the remnant and settled them in Samaria.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 PK 531

11 Ev 144; 4T 592; 6T 431

11, 12 GC 632; TM 231; 1T 430; 6T 407

12 Ev 218; 2T 194; 4T 592; 6T 26

CHAPTER 22

1 *The prophet lamenteth the invasion of Jewry by the Persians.* 8 *He reproveth their human wisdom and worldly joy.* 15 *He prophesieth Shebna's deprivation,* 20 *and Eliakim, prefiguring the kingdom of Christ, his substitution.*

1. The burden. See on ch. 13:1.

The valley of vision. Jerusalem is the “valley of vision,” as the message itself makes clear (see vs. 4, 8–10).

What aileth thee now? Literally, “What to you thus?” meaning, “What has happened to you that you act thus?”

Thou art wholly. Literally, “all of you.”

To the housetops. The flat roofs of the houses of Palestine were customary places for various activities (Judges 16:27; Neh. 8:16). At a time of grave danger the people had gathered on the housetops, lighthearted and reckless, indulging in drinking and revelry (see v. 13).

2. Stirs. Literally, “noise.”

Not slain with the sword. While the country of Judah was being devastated by the Assyrian armies and multitudes were dying, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were not risking their lives upon the field of battle, helping their compatriots; they were engaged in a strange and tumultuous seeking for pleasure. It was a sin for them to act thus at a time when so many of their brethren were suffering the loss of life and property (vs. 4–11), especially since God had proclaimed mourning (v. 12).

3. Thy rulers are fled. Isaiah may refer to a lull in Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem, caused by the approach of Taharka with his Ethiopian army (see ch. 37:8, 9), which gave some of the leaders in Jerusalem an opportunity to flee the city. Such a lifting of the siege, temporary though it was, could well have been regarded by the populace of Jerusalem as marking the end of the Assyrian danger, and thus could have led to widespread rejoicing.

Bound by the archers. The meaning of the Hebrew expression thus translated is uncertain. Some have suggested the translation, “without the bow they have been bound,” meaning that in their endeavor to escape, the rulers were captured without their weapons and without having engaged in battle.

4. Look away from me. Isaiah is deeply affected over the plight of Jerusalem, and requests to be left alone in his grief. Later, Jeremiah also wailed bitterly over the fate of the city, which he likewise termed “the daughter of my people” (Lam. 3:48; cf. Jer. 8:19).

5. A day of trouble. Isaiah pictures the day of trouble and distress when the enemy surrounds the city and breaks down its walls with battering rams, and when its people cry to the mountains in their anguish (see Isa. 2:19, 21; Hosea 10:8; cf. Luke 23:30; Rev. 6:16).

The valley of vision. See on v. 1.

6. Elam bare the quiver. Among the Assyrian forces invading Judea were skilled archers from Elam (Jer. 49:35).

Kir. The exact location of Kir is unknown. It is mentioned in 2 Kings 16:9 as the place to which Tiglath-pileser carried away captive the people of Damascus (see also Amos 1:5).

Uncovered the shield. That is, prepared for battle.

7. Thy choicest valleys. There were many valleys around Jerusalem, including those of Hinnom and Kidron. These would be filled with hostile forces attacking the city.

8. Discovered the covering. That is, revealed the secret defenses of Judah, making it possible to overcome the nation.

The house of the forest. The royal armory. The golden (later bronze) shields of the royal guard were kept in the house of the forest of Lebanon (see on 1 Kings 10:17; 14:27). The people are pictured as turning to their weapons of defense.

9. The breaches. Upon the threat of attack the people of Jerusalem became aware of various parts of the wall of the city of David that were in urgent need of repair (2 Chron. 32:5).

The lower pool. See on 2 Chron. 32:4. A reservoir constructed especially to supply the city with water during a siege, and also to deprive an enemy outside the city of an ample water supply.

10. Numbered the houses. A list was made of the houses in Jerusalem, certain of which were selected for demolition in order to provide materials for the repair of the city walls.

11. A ditch between the two walls. The “ditch” here referred to was possibly the tunnel built by Hezekiah to conduct the waters from the old pool at Gihon, a distance of 1,749 ft. (533 m.) southwest, to another pool, or reservoir, known as the Pool of Siloam (see Vol. II, p. 87). Outside an earlier wall, and also outside Hezekiah’s aqueduct and the Pool of Siloam, was a second wall (see on 2 Chron. 32:5). The entire water supply of the Gihon was thus made available to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and denied an enemy without the city. The walls protected the water system.

Him that fashioned it. Many in Jerusalem no longer looked to God for protection, but to the works they had themselves devised. They forgot that the Lord was the true builder and maker of the city, and alone able to provide the help needed in time of distress.

12. Call to weeping. The danger confronting the city should lead the people to repentance and prayer. This was true of Hezekiah (ch. 37:1–4, 15–20). In view of the coming of the day of the Lord, Joel similarly called upon the people to turn to God with fasting and weeping, that He might be gracious to them (Joel 2:12–17).

13. Behold joy and gladness. In spite of their desperate situation the people did not turn to God, but continued in revelry and feasting. They had given themselves over to

reckless sensuality, from which nothing could dissuade them. Compare Paul's comments on the Epicurean philosophy of his time (1 Cor. 15:32).

14. *This iniquity.* The people refused to turn to the Lord, and their iniquity could not be pardoned. This was no arbitrary decree on the part of God. The Lord could not save them while they persisted in their perversity.

15. *Unto Shebna.* Shebna's position as treasurer was one of the most important in the realm. He may have been the royal vizier, acting in behalf of the king in all important affairs of state. These may have included national finances, internal affairs, and responsibility for the royal household. As regent, Jotham had been "over the house" (2 Kings 15:5).

16. *A sepulchre.* Isaiah was roused to indignation by the arrogance of Shebna. He seems to have newly risen to power and affluence, and to have had no family tomb where his fathers would have been interred. Accordingly, he determined to construct a new and stately tomb to honor him in his position of importance and to ensure him a place in the memory of future generations. Instead of devoting his efforts to the saving of the nation in this time of peril, his chief aim was to promote his personal interests. Rock-hewn sepulchres of the type Shebna was constructing for himself are common in the environs of Jerusalem.

Prof. N. Avigad has identified this tomb of Shebna with one on the slopes of the Mount of Olives discovered many years ago, and from which an inscription was taken to the British Museum. This inscription, which defied decipherment for many years, reads: "This is [the sepulcher of Sheban]yahu, who is over the house. There is no silver or gold here, but [his bones] and the bones of his slave-wife with him. Cursed be the man who will open this!" (Brackets indicate a conjectural restoration of broken and illegible portions of the inscription in its present state.)

17. *Carry thee away.* Literally, the clause reads, "hurl you away with a great hurling." Shebna would not occupy the tomb, but perish in a foreign land.

18. *Toss thee.* Isaiah vividly foretells the fate of Shebna.

A large country. Probably Mesopotamia.

The chariots. Ostentatious pride was the weakness of Shebna. He provided himself with a splendid chariot, which would, however, accompany him into captivity.

19. *Drive thee.* The Lord would remove Shebna from his post of honor. When Sennacherib's envoys came to Jerusalem, another (see on v. 21) took his place "over the household," while he filled the inferior position of scribe (ch. 36:22).

20. *My servant Eliakim.* Eliakim has not been mentioned previously, and we know nothing of his earlier history.

21. *Clothe him.* Eliakim was to be given Shebna's position, together with the robe and girdle, the insignia of office. This prediction soon came to pass (Isa. 36:22; cf. Prov. 16:18; Dan. 4:37; Luke 14:11).

He shall be a father. Unlike Shebna, Eliakim was to exercise his office wisely, ruling for the good of the people and proving to be "a father" to them in their time of need. Nothing is known of his later activities other than the fact that he was head of the delegation that treated with Sennacherib's envoys who came to demand the surrender of Jerusalem (ch. 36:11, 22).

22. *The key.* As royal chamberlain, Eliakim would carry the keys of the palace.

23. As a nail. Or, “as a peg,” either for fastening a tent to the ground or on which to hang household articles. It is used here in the latter sense, as a symbol of something that is fast and secure and upon which men may place their confidence.

For a glorious throne. Eliakim would be an honor to the hitherto obscure house of his father. It is the Lord who thus raises the poor and lowly to positions of trust and honor (1 Sam. 2:7, 8; see on Luke 14:11).

24. All the glory. Literally, “all the weight [or honor].” The symbol of a peg on which things may be hung is continued.

25. Cut down, and fall. This verse has given rise to much discussion. Some think it applies to Eliakim, who, in spite of all the gracious things thus far said concerning him, will ultimately prove unworthy, like his predecessor, and be removed from his position of trust and honor. Others think this prediction cannot apply to Eliakim, for it seems inappropriate that a prediction of shame should follow so closely upon one of honor, without explanation. This verse provides the climax to a solemn message against Judah and Jerusalem (see on v. 1). Here, it may refer to the nation as such, and not to Eliakim as an individual. That peg would be removed, the burden fastened to it would fall, and the end would be disgrace and ruin. Such was indeed the fate of Jerusalem and Judah, and of those against whose riotous revelry this “burden” was directed.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

23 Ev 177; PK 348; 9T 27, 112

CHAPTER 23

1 *The miserable overthrow of Tyre. 17 Their unhappy return.*

1. The burden of Tyre. See on ch. 13:1. Tyre and Sidon were the chief cities of the great maritime nation of Phoenicia (see Vol. II, pp. 67–69), and this message is, therefore, one of divine judgment against Phoenicia. Tyre and Sidon were frequently the target of attack by great nations of the Near East, including Assyria and Babylon, and later by Alexander the Great. To which of these attacks does Isaiah refer? Probably all of them. Certainly the Lord had a message for Phoenicia in Isaiah’s time, and the prophecy, or “burden,” would thus include measures taken by Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II, and Sennacherib against Tyre. But the prophecy is doubtless of a more comprehensive nature, and refers also to later times, when the judgment predicted became even more extensive, as in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and of Alexander the Great. For Ezekiel’s parallel prophecy, see Eze. 26 to 28. For parallel imagery in the book of Revelation, compare Isa. 23:2, 8, 11, 15, 17 with Rev. 17:2, 5; 18:2, 3, 5, 11, 23. See also on Isa. 47:1; Jer. 25:12; 50:1; Eze. 26:13.

Ships of Tarshish. Tarshish is generally believed to have been a Phoenician colony in Spain (see on Gen. 10:4). “Ships of Tarshish,” several times mentioned in connection with Tyre, were probably refinery ships carrying metals (see on Isa. 2:16) and other goods of trade (Eze. 27:12). Here, ships on their return voyage from Tarshish are meant. Isaiah’s prophecy pictures the great ships of Tarshish laden with wealth, making their way around the Mediterranean to their home port of Tyre, and just before arriving there, finding that the city had been taken.

No entering in. The ships now had no home port to which they might go.

Chittim. Probably Cyprus. See on Num. 24:24. Here would be the last port of call on the voyage from Spain to Tyre, and here the crews of the homeward-bound ships would learn of the disaster that had befallen their home port.

2. *Be still.* Or, “be dumb,” in astonishment, grief, and terror.

The isle. Or, “the coast” of Phoenicia.

Zidon. The term Sidon frequently represents all Phoenicia. In earlier times the city of Sidon was more prominent than Tyre (see Vol. II, p. 68). The Homeric Greeks and the Assyrians at times used the term Sidon in this sense. Tyre was known as the metropolis of the Sidonians, and the Tyrian king, the “king of the Sidonians” (see on 1 Kings 16:31).

3. *Sihor.* Either (1) a part of the Nile, (2) an unidentified body of water on Egypt’s eastern border, or (3) the *Wâdī el-‘Arish* (the “River of Egypt”), commonly regarded as the southwestern limit of Palestine (see on 1 Chron. 13:5). The “seed of Sihor” evidently means the grain of Egypt. Phoenician imported grain from Egypt, and Phoenician vessels undoubtedly carried it in an extensive trade.

The river. That is, the Nile (see on ch. 19:5, 6).

4. *Be thou ashamed.* To be without offspring was regarded as a disgrace (see on Gen. 16:4; 20:18; 30:23; 38:25). Sidon is here pictured as bemoaning the fact that she is without children. She sits alone, desolate and forsaken, weeping over her forlorn and helpless condition (see Isa. 47:7–9; Rev. 18:7).

Strength. Heb. *ma‘oz*, “stronghold.”

5. *As at the report.* The first clause reads literally, “when the report is heard in Egypt.” Upon receiving the report of the doom of Phoenicia, Egypt would be stricken with anguish. When the Assyrians wreaked their vengeance on Tyre and Sidon they were in a position to attack Egypt. In the days of Nebuchadnezzar and of Alexander the Great the capture of Tyre was preliminary to an invasion of Egypt (see Eze. 29:18–20).

6. *Howl.* The doom of Tyre was to bring distress to all the coast line of Phoenicia (see on v. 2) and to other areas that depended upon Phoenician commerce. Those inhabitants of Tyre who were able to escape from the city would flee to such distant places as Tarshish.

7. *Your joyous city.* The prophet taunts Tyre because of her coming doom. Compare this with his taunting song against Babylon (ch. 14:4–23). Phoenician colonies dotted the shores of the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Atlantic coast of Europe.

8. *Who hath taken?* Who is responsible for the doom that will lay Tyre low? Tyre stands in her might and glory, but a power far greater than she has pronounced judgment against her.

Whose merchants. Compare Rev. 18:23.

9. *The Lord of hosts.* Isaiah answers the question of v. 8. Tyre proudly vaunts herself against the Lord of heaven, setting herself up as greater than God (Eze. 28:2–8), but the Lord will reduce her to humiliation and shame (see Isa. 13:11; 14:24, 26, 27). The destruction of Tyre will be a demonstration to all of how the Lord humbles the pride and the haughtiness of men.

10. *Pass through thy land.* Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads, “serve thy land,” and the LXX reflects this reading. The exact meaning of this verse is not clear, and various interpretations have been given to it. The one addressed is the “daughter of Tarshish,” that is, Tarshish itself, or its inhabitants. They are to leave their city like a river overflowing its banks, and go wherever they can.

No more strength. That is, “restraint.” They are now free to do as they please, and Tyre can no longer restrain them. After the fall of Tyre the Phoenician colonies carried on

for themselves. Some (such as Carthage) became even more powerful than Tyre itself had been.

11. *He shook the kingdoms.* The Lord's hand was "stretched out" over many nations, and they were shaken to their very foundations. Figuratively, God was shaking the entire world in order to carry out His will (see Isa. 2:19; cf. Haggai 2:6, 7; Heb. 12:26, 27). In this process many nations would be removed and others set up in their places.

Merchant city. Heb. *kena'an*, Canaan, the name by which the Phoenicians referred to themselves.

12. *No more rejoice.* The final doom of the Phoenicians is here pictured. Whatever they might choose to do, they would not succeed. Heretofore Sidon had been undefiled—she had been able to protect herself against invasion. Now, however, she was to be stripped of her robe of virginity and would be reduced to shame and reproach before all the world. Should the Phoenicians flee to Chittim (Cyprus; see on v. >1) they would find no rest, for there, too, the hand of the enemy would lay hold of them. There would be no escape.

13. *This people was not.* The Hebrew of v. 13 is obscure and difficult. In Isaiah's time Assyria moved against Tyre, but without conquering it. Nebuchadnezzar later besieged it for 13 terrible years (see Eze. 28:18). Perhaps this campaign of Nebuchadnezzar is here foretold.

14. *Howl.* See on v. 1. The prophecy of doom for Tyre concludes as it began. The Phoenician "ships of Tarshish" are to wail because Tyre, their stronghold, has been brought to ruin.

15. *Seventy years.* It is difficult to give a literal application of this prophecy, for the history of Tyre is not sufficiently well known. At the present it is not possible to give any specific year when the 70 years here referred to began and when they came to an end. Some think this period was roughly parallel with the 70 years of Jewish captivity in Babylon (2 Chron. 36:21; Jer. 25:11; 29:10; Dan. 9:2; Zech. 1:12; 7:5), which began with Nebuchadnezzar's first capture of Jerusalem and ended with the restoration and return under Cyrus and Darius of Persia. Nebuchadnezzar began his 13-year siege of Tyre shortly after his capture and destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Tyre was again an important city during the Persian period, and was again captured by Alexander in 332 B.C.

The days of one king. The word "king" is probably used here for "kingdom," as in Dan. 2:44; 7:17; 8:21. This expression may therefore denote the period of Babylonian occupation.

Shall Tyre sing as an harlot. Literally, "it will be to Tyre according to the song of the harlot." Tyre desired commercial supremacy. She would do anything for the sake of profit. In this respect she was like the prostitute Babylon, who sold herself for gain (Isa. 47:15; Rev. 17:2; 18:3).

16. *Take an harp.* A lyre. Tyre was to resort to her successful wiles, enticing merchants to trade with her in order to profit at their expense. She is compared to a lewd woman singing and playing, using these arts to seduce unwary men (see Prov. 7:7–21). Babylon also made use of "enchantments" to extend her influence (Isa. 47:9, 12; Rev. 17:4; 18:3).

17. *Fornication.* That is, the illicit relations into which Tyre entered with the other nations of earth for the sake of gain. Honor, right, justice, and decency were all forgotten

for the sake of profit. The same expression is used concerning Babylon (Rev. 17:2; 18:3). The world was no different then from what it is today. The curse of Babylon and Tyre is the curse of our modern age.

18. Holiness. That is, “a consecrated thing.” The doom of Tyre and the ultimate triumph of Zion are foretold. In spite of her wiles Tyre would not continue forever, deceiving and defrauding men. She would fall, but Jerusalem would triumph. The harlot Babylon would suffer the same fate (Jer. 51:7, 8; Rev. 17:1, 5, 16; 18:2, 7–23).

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18 TM 335

CHAPTER 24

1 *The doleful judgments of God upon the land. 13 A remnant shall joyfully praise him. 16 God in his judgments shall advance his kingdom.*

1. Maketh the earth empty. Like all of Isaiah’s prophetic messages, that of ch. 24 was originally addressed to literal Israel and describes the manner in which God would have laid the earth desolate and vanquished the enemies of Israel had the latter proved faithful. But in view of Israel’s unfaithfulness, this prophecy, like others originally made with respect to that nation, will be fulfilled to God’s people today (see pp. 30–36). In Rev. 20 John applies the description of the earth, here given, to its desolate state during the millennium.

Isaiah has dealt at length with the judgments of God upon individual nations (chs. 13–23). Now his prophetic vision is lifted to the broad horizon of history as a whole, and in chs. 24–28 he describes the great closing scenes, when God’s people are to be delivered and their foes vanquished. In ch. 24 Isaiah presents a graphic picture of this earth after its kings have been subdued (vs. 21, 22) and before the Lord of hosts reigns “in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem” (v. 23).

Turneth it upside down. Literally, “disconcerts its face.” This is a striking description of the terrible convulsions that shake the world at the second coming of Christ (see Ps. 46:1–3, 6, 8; Rev. 6:16; 16:18–20).

2. As with the people. There will be no favored classes at the time of Christ’s return; all will suffer the same calamity. Rich and poor, high and low, men of every class, color, and occupation, will be involved in the same common destruction (see Rev. 6:15; 19:18).

3. Utterly emptied. When Christ returns, all the living wicked will be slain and all the righteous will ascend with Him into heaven (see Jer. 25:30–33; Luke 17:26, 29, 30; 1 Thess. 5:3; Rev. 19:11–21; 20:4–6). The earth will thus be left without inhabitants (see Jer. 4:25).

4. Haughty people. Literally, “the high of the people.” The highest of the people, those who have raised themselves to levels above their fellows, are humbled by the Lord (see chs. 2:11, 12, 17; 13:11).

5. The earth also is defiled. God is holy. He gave His law to keep men pure and the world undefiled. By rejecting that law, men defile both themselves and the world in which they live. The contagion of sin has infected the very ground beneath our feet, the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe (see Gen. 3:17; Num. 35:33; Ps. 107:34). With every passing year the earth becomes more and more corrupt. If God were not to intervene, the time would come when the defilement of sin would so debase the human race as to make life itself utterly impossible (see Gen. 6:5, 11, 12; DA 36, 37).

Everlasting covenant. See on Jer. 31:31–33; Eze. 16:60.

6. The curse devoured. It is not God, but Satan, the instigator of sin, who is responsible for the curse that results from it. Everywhere the forces of evil are at work and everywhere the handiwork of Satan is clearly seen (DA 636; GC 589). In disease and death, in earthquakes and storms, in fires and floods, the work of the evil one is manifest. Transgression of the laws of God has not brought peace and prosperity, but trouble, pestilence, pain, and ultimately death.

Burned. Probably under the fourth plague (Rev. 16:8, 9).

Few men left. This probably refers to the righteous remnant, who have not fallen under the judgments of God.

7. The new wine mourneth. The vineyards are destroyed and the fruits of the earth are consumed in the burning heat of the fourth plague (Rev. 16:8, 9; GC 628). The song of the merryhearted harvesters is hushed, for the land is desolate.

8. Tabrets. See Vol. III, pp. 30, 31.

Harp. Lyre; see Vol. III, pp. 33, 34. When men undergo the terrible calamities of the last days they will no longer think of “mirth” or “joy” (see Jer. 7:34; Jer 16:9; 25:10; Rev. 18:22; cf. Eze. 26:13; Hosea 2:11).

9. With a song. Drinking is generally associated with festivity and pleasure. In that day the Lord will turn festivities into mourning and songs into lamentation (Amos 8:10; cf. Dan. 5:1–6).

10. Confusion. Heb. *tohu*, “chaos,” “emptiness,” “vanity.” In Gen. 1:2 the word is translated “without form.” Whether “the city” here represents Babylon (see Jer. 51:8), and the word “chaos” stands for its corrupt moral condition (see 1 Sam. 12:21; Isa. 41:29), or whether both “the city” and its chaotic state are symbolic of the entire world, is not clear. Either would be appropriate to the context and to the tenor of Scripture. The world will revert to its primeval chaotic state.

11. A crying for wine. Men seek to escape calamity by resorting to intoxication.

All joy is darkened. The sun of joy has set and the shades of eternal night have fallen (see Jer. 8:20). Men at length awake to the fact that by excluding from their lives Him who is the light of life, they have brought unending night upon themselves.

12. Desolation. “The city” (v. 10) is left a crumbling ruin. The whole world has been reduced to a desolate wilderness, without light or life.

13. Olive tree. See on ch. 17:6. In the midst of Isaiah’s view of the destruction of the earth he catches a glimpse of the salvation of the remnant (see chs. 1:9; 10:20–22; 11:11). They will be like the few olives that remain on a tree that has been “shaken of a mighty wind” (Rev. 6:13), or like the few grapes that remain when the harvest is over.

14. They shall sing. When everywhere there is weeping and gnashing of teeth because of the horrors that have come upon the world, the righteous will find that their sorrow has turned into joy and that the glad morning of eternity has dawned (see ch. 25:8, 9).

15. Glorify ye the Lord. There is every reason for the righteous to give glory to God. Except for His redeeming grace they would have perished with the world.

The fires. Heb. *’urim*, from *’or*, “light.” Possibly, *’urim* may refer to “the east” as the region of light at daybreak. “The isles of the sea” may refer to the islands of the Mediterranean Sea, and be a poetic designation for the “west.” The word *yam*, “sea,” is

often used for “west,” and is so translated in Gen. 28:14; Num. 34:6; etc. If this be the meaning of Isa. 24:15, men are heard everywhere singing praise to God (see v. 16).

16. *Glory to the righteous.* Songs are heard ascending to Christ, the Righteous One (see v. 15). At a time such as this it would hardly appear appropriate to ascribe “glory” to men, however “righteous” they might be. Compare the universal song of praise to God, recorded in Rev. 19:1–6, at this very time.

My leanness. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. It may mean, literally, “leanness to me.” The prophet here seems to turn momentarily from the glory of the future to the shame and misery of the present. “Leanness” is used as a symbol of wasting and sorrow, a result of the judgments of God (Ps. 106:15; see Isa. 10:16; cf. 17:4). After a brief view of the joys of God’s people at the hour of their deliverance, Isaiah turns to the troubles and disappointments of the lost, and continues with a description of the terrible judgment to come.

Treacherous. When it is too late, men realize that they owe their plight to their own treacherous dealings with God. The same word is translated “deceitfully” in Ex. 21:8. It implies a course of action directly contrary to one’s knowledge of right.

17. *The pit, and the snare.* Here, in rapid succession, are pictured the terrors and calamities that are to befall the wicked. Jer. 48:44 gives this same succession of inevitable judgments. None of the wicked will escape (Isa. 24:18) the effects of the seven last plagues. He who escapes from one will be taken by another, and he who escapes from that will be taken by a third.

18. *The windows from on high.* Doom, sooner or later, is altogether certain, for death and destruction come from every direction. All nature is turned out of its course (GC 636; cf. Gen. 7:11; 8:2). Now, the heavens will rain down fire instead of water (Ps. 50:3; 2 Peter 3:7, 10, 12).

The foundations. The earth will be shaken as if by the voice of God (Ps. 46:2, 3; Isa. 2:19; Heb. 12:26, 27; Rev. 16:18).

19. *Clean dissolved.* Heb. *parar*, literally, in the form here used, “causes itself to be tossed to and fro.” *Parar* is translated “shaken” in Job 16:12.

Moved exceedingly. Heb. *mut*, literally, in the form here used, “causes itself to totter.”

20. *Removed like a cottage.* Literally, “shaken to and fro like a booth.” The “cottage” was a temporary structure where one might spend the night while watching the ripening grapes in a vineyard (see ch. 1:8). The Hebrew of ch. 24:19, 20 provides no basis for the conjecture that the earth will be moved out of its orbit during the great day of the Lord. The description here given refers to the earthquake at the return of Christ, which will no doubt be the most terrible convulsion the earth has ever known (see Rev. 16:18–20). The entire contour of the earth’s surface will then be changed. Mountains will be shaken from their foundations, islands will be moved out of their places, and the surface of the earth will heave and swell like the waves on a storm-tossed sea (see Ps. 46:2, 3, 6). The apostle Peter (2 Peter 3:7, 10–13) provides another vivid picture of the complete destruction that will overwhelm this present world, and out of the ruins of which the Lord will create “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

21. *The high ones.* Heb. *marom*, rendered “haughty people” in v. 4, who are “of the earth.” In v. 18, however, the same word appears again as “high,” apparently referring to

“heaven” (Gen. 7:11). In Isa. 24:21 the phrase “the kings of the earth upon the earth” implies that “the high ones that are on high” refers to Satan and the evil angels. Paul refers to Satan as “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2), and to the unseen leaders of evil as “the rulers of the darkness of this world” that abide “in high places” (Eph. 6:12). In 1 Cor. 15:24, 25 Paul refers to their subjugation by Christ. Isaiah foresees the time when evil angels and evil men will all suffer punishment (see Matt. 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4, 9; Rev. 20:10–15).

22. As prisoners. Satan and his legions of evil angels, “the high ones” of v. 21, and “the kings of the earth” are now “gathered together, as prisoners.” The former are confined to this earth, which, in its chaotic state (vs. 1, 3, 19, 20), becomes their prison for 1,000 years (see on Rev. 20:1, 2, 7), and the latter are confined in the prison house of the grave (see on Rev. 20:5).

The pit. Heb. *bor*, a “cistern” hollowed out of the ground for storing water. During the dry season, or when not in use as a “cistern,” such a “pit” provided a suitable place for detaining prisoners (see Gen. 37:20; Jer. 38:6–13; Zech. 9:11; etc.). The “pit” is also used as a synonym for “grave” (Ps. 30:3; Ps. 88:4, 5; Isa. 14:15; 38:18; etc.).

After many days. That is, after the 1,000 years (see Rev. 20:2–7; GC 661). Upon the expiration of this period of time Satan is released from his prison for a short time and the wicked dead are raised, soon to make preparations for taking the New Jerusalem (see on Rev. 20:7–9).

23. The sun ashamed. The most glorious source of light now known pales into insignificance when compared with the glory of Christ (see Isa. 60:19, 20; Rev. 21:23; 22:5).

Lord of hosts shall reign. This refers to the glorious day of triumph when the saints will reign with Christ in eternal joy and glory. The New Jerusalem then becomes the capital of the earth, and here Christ will reign forever (Jer. 3:17; Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Zech. 14:4, 9; Rev. 11:15; 21:2–5; 7:15–17).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 GC 657; PK 537, 726
- 1–8Ed 180; 9T 14
- 3 GC 657
- 4, 5 CH 461; GC 590
- 5 5T 144; 9T 267
- 5, 6 GC 657; PK 537, 726
- 8 PK 726
- 14 Ed 307; PK 730
- 16 2T 198, 234
- 20 DA 780; PP 340
- 22 GC 661
- 23 DA 458

CHAPTER 25

- 1 *The prophet praiseth God, for his judgments, 6 for his saving benefits, 9 and for his victorious salvation.*

1. I will praise. This chapter, particularly vs. 1–5 is a song of praise. The prophet raises his voice in thanks to the Lord for bringing the reign of sin to an end and establishing His glorious kingdom, as announced in ch. 24:23.

Thy counsels of old. The plan for man's salvation was not an afterthought. Long before the creation of this world God took counsel with Christ concerning the plan to be followed in case of the emergency of sin. Christ then offered Himself, and became "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Then began the "counsel of peace" (Zech. 6:13; see PP 63) between Christ and the Father on behalf of lost mankind. It was the eternal purpose of God that man should enjoy life, and to the carrying out of that purpose all the resources of heaven were devoted (see Isa. 46:10).

2. *A city.* Probably a reference to Babylon (see on chs. 14:4; 24:10), the symbolic center of the forces of evil in the days of Isaiah. Literal Babylon raised itself up against Jerusalem, and through that pagan center Satan put forth mighty efforts to control the world, but it was to be reduced to a heap of ruins. For the fulfillment of this prophecy in Isaiah's day, see on chs. 13:19–22; 14:4. In the days immediately prior to the second coming of Christ mystical Babylon will be destroyed (Rev. 18:10, 21). The destruction of Babylon is typical of the destruction of the might and power of Satan (see on Isa. 14:4–23; Jer. 51:24–26, 41, 53, 55, 64).

3. *The strong people.* The Hebrew has no article here before either "people" or "city," and the application is therefore general rather than particular. When the Lord destroyed Babylon (see on v. 2), other nations would learn to recognize His might and power. Compare Rev. 11:8, 13, where the judgment that fell upon the wicked "city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt," resulted in the rest being "affrighted" and giving "glory to the God of heaven"; and Ps. 76:9, 10, where the Lord's arising in judgment "to save all the meek of the earth" will result in man's wrath bringing praise to God.

4. *A strength.* Or, "stronghold." The truth here stated applies to any and every deliverance the Lord brings to the poor and needy from their oppressors. In Isaiah's day it applied to the destruction of Sennacherib's armies that came against Judah. In Daniel's day it applied to the downfall of Babylon (see on ch. 14:4–6), and at the second coming of Christ it applies to the destruction of all the powers of evil.

The storm. The fierceness of the forces of evil is compared to the blast of a terrible storm dashing against a wall.

5. *Noise of strangers.* That is, of "aliens" (see on Ex. 12:19). The thought of Isa. 25:4 continues with a change in the figures employed. Oppression by foreigners is here compared to the withering heat of a prolonged drought that sears the pastures and parches the land.

The shadow. The "heat" will be dispelled by a cooling "cloud" God brings to overshadow His people.

The branch. Literally, "the song," as the word is translated elsewhere (Ps. 119:54; Isa. 24:16; etc.). When the Lord intervenes the song of these ruthless enemies of God's people will be stilled.

6. *This mountain.* That is, Mt. Zion (see on Ps. 48:2; cf. Isa. 24:23).

A feast of fat things. Christ's coronation feast (see on Rev. 19:7–9). Isaiah envisages the time when mystic Babylon (see on v. 2) will be destroyed (Rev. 19:2) and when the New Jerusalem will be the capital of the re-created earth (Rev. 21:1–3). God calls men to accept His invitation to the feast (Matt. 22:2–4, 9, 10; cf. Luke 14:16, 17). For the twofold application of Isaiah's prophecies, see on ch. 24:1 cf. pp. 34–36; see on Deut. 18:15.

7. Face of the covering. In this world men walk, as it were, in the shadow of darkness, with a veil drawn over their eyes. This may be a veil of sorrow or mourning, or a veil of ignorance (Isa. 29:10; 1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Cor. 3:12–18; Eph. 4:18). Such a veil now covers the world as a whole, though it is lifted for individuals who accept Christ. But there will be no veil in that happy day when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” and when “the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 11:9; 6:3).

People. Literally, “peoples.” This promise includes God’s people of all ages and among all nations.

8. Swallow up death. Isaiah presents a glorious picture of the resurrection, the deliverance from death that will be accomplished when Jesus returns to reign. This theme was re-echoed by the apostles Paul (1 Cor. 15:54, 55) and John (Rev. 7:17; 21:4).

Victory. Literally, “for ever,” as the word is translated elsewhere (see Ps. 44:23; Isa. 34:10).

Wipe away tears. Compare Rev. 21:4.

The rebuke. That is, the ignominy and reproach to which the righteous of all ages have submitted during their earthly sojourn. Now the taunt of the heathen, “Where is their God?” (Ps. 79:10), is forever stilled. No longer are they oppressed and afflicted, but stand as victors, crowned with righteousness and singing songs of everlasting joy.

9. This is our God. This joyous shout of triumph comes from the lips of the scattered saints as Christ appears in the clouds of heaven. Their earnest cries for deliverance are now changed to anthems of praise.

We have waited. After the appearance of many false christs (see on Matt. 24:24) and after Satan’s masterpiece of deception, his impersonation of Christ (GC 624), the saints now joyfully acknowledge Him for whom they have waited patiently for so long. The wicked have acclaimed Satan as Christ and as the savior of the world, but the saints have denied Satan their allegiance and reserved it for Jesus.

10. This mountain. See on v. 6.

Moab. In this grand anthem of praise Moab stands for all the enemies of the people of God. For centuries the Moabites had been a sore thorn in the flesh of Israel, but now they, with all other enemies, are to be forever subdued. For other prophecies of judgment upon Moab see Isa. 15; 16; Jer. 48; Eze. 25:8–11.

As straw. Mixed with dung by the feet of cattle. Compare the picture of the Lord treading the wine press (Isa. 63:3; Rev. 14:20).

11. As he that swimmeth. These words are spoken of Moab, floundering, as it were, in the troubled waters of distress and struggling in vain to escape. Compare the psalmist’s prayer for deliverance from the sea of troubles in which he found himself (Ps. 69:1, 2, 14, 15). Some have understood that it is the Lord who “shall spread forth his hands,” as he treads the “straw” (Isa. 25:10).

Their pride. Literally, “his pride.”

Spoils. Perhaps, “skill.”

Their hands. Literally, “his hands.”

12. The high fort. Moab is here pictured as a high and strong fortress that will be overthrown by the Lord. The nation of Moab again stands in a general sense for all the enemies of the people of God (see on v. 6). Thus is predicted the casting down of every stronghold of the hosts of darkness and the destruction of every fortress of evil. All the

heathen will be brought down, and God's people alone will be exalted in the great day of the wrath of God (see Dan. 7:27).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 PK 702
- 4 MH 32; PK 725
- 7 PK 371
- 8 COL 180; GC 650; PK 724
- 8, 9 Ed 182; GC 300; PK 728
- 9 COL 421; EW 110, 287; GC 644; ML 343; SR 411; 1T 354; 8T 253

CHAPTER 26

1 *A song inciting to confidence in God, 5 for his judgments, 12 and for his favour to his people. 20 An exhortation to wait on God.*

1. In that day. That is, the great day of the Lord pictured in chs. 24 and 25. This will be a day of distress and destruction for the wicked, but a day of salvation and rejoicing for the people of God. This chapter consists of a song of hope and trust that will be in the hearts of God's people when troubles overwhelm the earth as Christ is about to return to reign.

We have a strong city. In Isaiah's day this was literal Jerusalem and Mt. Zion (ch. 24:23). Sennacherib brought the might of Assyria against Jerusalem but did not take it (see on chs. 36; 37). What the power of man could not do for the city, God's power did for it. He made Jerusalem a city of salvation and strength, whose walls were impregnable.

2. The righteous nation. Jerusalem will be called "The city of righteousness, the faithful city" (ch. 1:26), because its inhabitants will all be holy and righteous. Only those who are loyal to God and who serve Him with faithfulness can expect to "enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14; see on Matt. 7:21–27).

Keepeth the truth. Literally, "keeps faithfulness," that is, "remains faithful."

3. In perfect peace. Literally, "in peace, peace." Perfect peace will be the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of God and it may be the happy experience of God's children here. Perfect submission to the will of God brings the blessing of perfect serenity. The mature Christian is at peace with God, with himself, and with the world about him. Compare the experience of Paul (2 Cor. 11:23–28; cf. ch. 4:8–10), his philosophy of suffering (2 Cor. 4:17, 18), and his confident assurance to us (Phil. 4:7). Trouble and turmoil may surround us, yet we enjoy a calmness and peace of mind of which the world knows nothing. This inward peace is reflected in a cheerful countenance, an unruffled temper, and a vigorous, glowing experience that stimulates all with whom we come in contact. The peace of the Christian depends not upon peaceful conditions in the world about him but upon the indwelling of the Spirit of God in his heart (see on Matt. 11:28–30; John 14:27).

4. The Lord Jehovah. See on ch. 12:2.

Everlasting strength. Literally, "an everlasting rock." Christ is the "Rock of Ages" to all who learn to place their trust in Him (Isa. 17:10; see on Deut. 32:4; Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 10:4).

5. The lofty city. Probably Babylon (see on ch. 25:2), the city whose king vaunted himself above the stars of God (see on ch. 14:4, 13). Mystical Babylon and Jerusalem have ever been arch foes in the great conflict of the ages (see on Isa. 14:4; Rev. 17:5; 18:24). For a graphic description of the fall of literal Babylon, see Isa. 13:19–22. For a

description of the fall of mystical Babylon, as presented by John, see Rev. 16:19; 17:16; 18:2, 6, 8, 20–23; 19:2.

6. The feet of the poor. That is, of God's oppressed people (see on Matt. 5:3). In ancient times conquerors were represented on their victory monuments as placing their feet upon the necks of conquered foes. The meek and lowly of God are here said to place their feet upon proud Babylon as she lies prostrate before them. The faithful people of God had long endured the cruel oppression of Babylon, but now the tables are to be reversed. Babylon is to be humiliated in the dust, and God's people are to triumph over her. Compare Isa. 14:2, where Israel is to "take them captives, whose captives they were" and "rule over their oppressors." The same will be true of mystical Babylon.

7. Uprightness. Literally, "smooth," or "level."

Thou, most upright. God is just in His dealings with both righteous and wicked. He opens the pathway for those who serve Him, guiding them in ways of righteousness and directing them ever onward and upward toward the gates of the eternal city.

Weigh. Literally, "make smooth," "make level." Instead of "make smooth the path of the righteous," Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads "make secure the path of righteousness."

8. Judgments. See on Ps. 119:7.

The desire. The righteous long to be like God and desire to be with Him. The "name" of God reveals His character and will. The earnest desire of God's people is for a fuller manifestation of His will, that they may walk in His ways and fulfill His purposes.

9. With my soul. Isaiah's soul yearning for God is similar to the experience of the psalmist (Ps. 42:1, 2; 62:1, 5; 63:1, 5, 6). Whether men realize it or not, the inner cravings of their hearts can be supplied only by a knowledge of, and communion with, God. Without God, there is always something lacking in the heart and life that nothing in this world can fully supply.

Thy judgments. The judgments of God impress all but the most hardened sinners, and by them many are turned away from paths of evil into ways of righteousness. There are those who become so engrossed with the things of this world that nothing but the judgments of Heaven will arouse them to their peril.

10. Favour. The exact opposite of "judgments" (v. 9). Prosperity cannot accomplish what adversity does. Some men neither appreciate kindness nor learn anything from it. Though surrounded by an atmosphere of kindness and justice, they will not reciprocate, but continue to deal out injustice to others. They do not realize that God knows and cares.

11. They will not see. When God lifts up His hand in kindness, for the guidance and protection of His people, the wicked do not see. They see not because they are willingly blind to spiritual things. But the time will come when they will be forced to see. Then, and not until then, they will be ashamed of the course they have taken.

Envy. Heb. *qin'ah*, "ardor," "passion," "zeal." A reading of the middle portion of v. 11 more in harmony with the context would be, "they shall see [thy] ardor for [thy] people, and be ashamed."

The fire of thine enemies. That is, "the fire [reserved] for thine enemies."

12. Ordain peace. Fire for God's enemies (v. 11), but for the righteous, peace.

In us. Or, "for us." God is constantly at work for His people, never against them. The trials and disappointments they experience are for their good.

13. Other lords. Probably a reference to nations such as Egypt and Assyria. For the time being Israel was forced to submit to their control, but acknowledged only one

Master, God. To “make mention” of God’s name is to give praise, honor, and allegiance to Him.

14. They are dead. That is, the enemies of Israel that had sought to crush them. This was true of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea and the Assyrians under Sennacherib.

15. Increased the nation. That is, Judah. In contrast, Judah’s enemies had all perished (v. 14). The scene of victory here depicted will be fully realized only when Christ makes all His enemies His footstool (Ps. 110:1; Matt. 22:44), and when “the kingdoms of this world” are subjected to His wise and just rule (see Dan. 2:44; Rev. 11:15). God will accomplish in the world made new what He would have wrought for Israel had that nation been faithful to Him (see pp. 27–30).

Removed it far. According to God’s original plan, the borders of Israel would gradually have been extended until they embraced the whole world (see pp. 28–30). When Israel rejected Christ and was, in turn, rejected, the Christian church inherited the promise of worldwide expansion, to be finally and completely realized in the new earth (see pp. 30, 35).

16. Visited thee. They sought God as a result of His chastening. Trouble brought earnest searching of heart and anxious prayers for deliverance.

17. Like as a woman. The comparison expresses the bitter anguish and consternation of God’s people in their hour of trial (Jer. 4:31; 6:23, 24; 30:6; see on Isa. 13:8). Their painful ordeal will be followed by an eternity of joy (see John 16:20, 21).

18. Brought forth wind. Centuries of effort appeared to have brought forth no worthwhile results. Israel felt that they had served God in vain. The glorious promises had not been realized. For an outline of God’s original plan for Israel, and their failure as a nation to meet God’s requirements and to realize the blessings promised, see pp. 27–33.

19. Thy dead. From the unsatisfactory experiences of the present the prophet’s attention is again directed to the glorious joys of the future, when “the dead in Christ shall rise” to be forever with their Lord (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Ezekiel likened the restoration of the Jews after the Babylonian captivity to resurrection from the dead (Eze. 37:1–14). Deliverance from the power of the enemy then was a type of the greater deliverance from the power of Satan and the grave. The return of the Jews from literal Babylon prefigured the deliverance of all God’s people from mystical Babylon (see on Rev. 18:2, 4).

Dwell in dust. That is, in the grave (Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 12:7).

20. Indignation. That is, of God against His enemies. God’s final “indignation” takes the form of what is known as the seven last plagues (Rev. 14:10; 15:1; cf. Isa. 34:2; Nahum 1:6). At the time of the slaying of the first-born in Egypt, God’s people were to remain within their homes (Ex. 12:22, 23). During the seven last plagues God invites His people to make Him their hiding place, that He may be to them a “refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1). Thus protected, His people need not fear though “the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea” (Ps. 46:2; cf. Ps. 25:5; 91:1–10). God’s anger lasts but “for a moment” (Isa. 54:8; cf. Ps. 30:5). The work of judgment is, for the Lord, a “strange work” (Isa. 28:21). But the hour of divine indignation against the wicked is also the hour of deliverance and triumph for the people of God.

21. Disclose her blood. This earth has been polluted by many a crime and by much innocent blood that cries, like the blood of Abel, for vengeance (Gen. 4:10; Rev. 6:10;

18:20, 24; 19:2). For other references on the vengeance of the Lord upon the wicked, see Micah 1:3–9; Jude 14, 15; Rev. 19:11–21.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–4Ed 167

2 ML 266; PK 366; SR 413; 1T 61

3 AA 510; COL 174; DA 331; GW 263; MB 53, 85; MH 289; ML 10, 181, 336, 338; PK 545; SR 317; 2T 327

4 ML 10; PP 413; TM 386

7 TM 438

9 PK 309

9, 10 PP 332

19 DA 786; EW 16; GC 300; PK 728; 1T 60

20 Ed 181; FE 545; PK 278; 6T 195, 404

20, 21 COL 178; GC 634; PK 725; TM 182

21 Ev 26; GC 657; PK 278; PP 339; SR 415; TM 458; 2T 446; 7T 141; 8T 53

CHAPTER 27

1 *The care of God over his vineyard.* 7 *His chastisements differ from judgments.* 12 *The church of Jews and Gentiles.*

1. *Leviathan.* See on Job 41:1; Ps. 74:13, 14. In ancient Canaanite mythology “leviathan” was regarded as a seven-headed serpent that fought against the gods and the forces of right, and was itself thus considered a personification of the forces of evil. Ancient Canaanite texts from Ras Shamrah (see Vol. I, pp. 128, 129) speak of a seven-headed monster “Lotan,” which is believed to be the same name as the Biblical word “leviathan” (Heb. *liwyathan*). In the ancient Mesopotamian creation myth there was a tradition of a primeval conflict between the gods and a dragon of chaos.

These and other legends among the heathen appear to indicate a confused but prevalent and persistent concept of Satan as a serpent engaged in a death struggle with the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15; cf. Rev. 12:3, 4). Job’s “leviathan” is, evidently from the context, a literal animal (Job 41), generally believed to be the crocodile. The psalmist, referring to the destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, speaks of the Lord as breaking “the heads of leviathan in pieces” (Ps. 74:13, 14). A many-headed crocodile would be a symbolic monster quite appropriate as a designation for Egypt. The crocodile flourished in the River Nile. Repeatedly in Isa. 27; 30; 31 Egypt is mentioned, and this tends to confirm the idea that “leviathan” here stands, first of all, as a symbol of Egypt. Compare also the “dragon” of Isa. 27:1 with that of Eze. 29:3; cf. ch. 32:2, 4.

Revelation pictures Satan as “a great red dragon, having seven heads” (Rev. 12:3), and declares that “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon” and that “the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world” (Rev. 12:7, 9). “That day” when the Lord slays “leviathan” appears to be the day when “the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity” (Isa. 26:21). Whether Isaiah’s words may be applied to Satan is uncertain.

2. *A vineyard of red wine.* In ch. 5:1–7 Isaiah sang a dirge over Israel, which is pictured as an unfruitful vineyard. Here the song is of a much more pleasant nature, for this vineyard ultimately fills the whole world with fruit (ch. 27:6).

3. *I the Lord do keep it.* The contrast between this vineyard and the preceding one is striking. In ch. 5:1–7 the Lord took away the hedge of the vineyard, laid it waste, and

commanded that no rain should fall upon it. In the former instance the vineyard is specifically said to have been “the house of Israel, and the men of Judah” (ch. 5:7). Here the same is apparently true (see ch. 27:6). Christ similarly compared His disciples to the branches of a vine (John 15:1–8).

4. *Fury is not in me.* God is not angry with His vineyard.

Briers and thorns. In the earlier vineyard briers and thorns took the place of the original vine, and the Lord pronounced sentence against Israel (ch. 5:6). Briers and thorns represent the work of the enemy; God will burn them up (see Matt. 13:30).

5. *Take hold of my strength.* Or, “my protection.” In the time of conflict, when the enemy is directing his efforts against God’s people, the church is admonished to turn to God for protection. If the church does, the enemy’s efforts will not succeed. God’s people have made their peace with Him and know Him to be their friend and not their enemy. They can look to Him with confidence, and in the midst of the greatest trials their souls may rest in peace. These words are particularly appropriate to the time of trouble, during the seven last plagues, when Satan does his utmost against the saints.

6. *Jacob.* That is, Israel (see on Gen. 32:28).

Fruit. Compare on Isa. 5:2; John 15:2–8. God planned that Israel should bring to all the world a knowledge of salvation (see pp. 28–30). When national Israel failed, the task was given to spiritual Israel, the Christian church. By another analogy, the church, composed of Gentiles and Jews, is represented by branches grafted in to replace the rejected natural branches of the tree of Israel (see Rom. 11:11, 12, 15–26).

7. *Hath he smitten him?* Has God smitten His own people as He smote those who waged war against them? Isaiah draws a contrast between God’s dealings with His own people and His dealings with their enemies. God’s people may suffer trial and tribulation, but they will not be utterly destroyed. God “smites” His people for their own good (see Heb. 12:5–11; Rev. 3:19), to remedy the defects in their character, not to destroy them.

8. *In measure.* Or, possibly, “a double measure.” The “measure” is the *se’ah* (see Vol. I, pp. 166, 167). For the context, see on v. 7. Our heavenly Father carefully metes out to His children only so much as may be for their own good, and no more. His purpose is not to harm but to heal (see Jer. 10:24). Divine judgments upon God’s people are tempered with forbearance and mercy.

When it shooteth. Literally, the clause reads, “by sending her away thou dost contend with her.” Isaiah’s exact meaning is not certain. He may allude to the forthcoming Babylonian captivity, which was a remedial punishment (see Isa. 48:10; Jer. 30:11–17; Hosea 2:6–23; Micah 4:10–12).

Stayeth his rough wind. Literally, “he expelled [her, that is, Judah] with his vehement breath,” or “he expelled his stern breath.” The meaning is not altogether clear. The east wind was a hot, dry, suffocating wind, blowing in from the desert, a fit symbol of death and destruction (Gen. 41:6; Job. 27:21; Ps. 48:7; Jer. 18:17; Hosea 13:15). Figuratively, this wind represents judgments God permits to come upon His people. The “east wind” is said to be the “breath” of God. Punishment appeared to come from natural causes, though in reality it was ordained, or permitted, by God.

9. *The iniquity of Jacob.* It is the Lord’s purpose to purify His people, not to destroy them (see on vs. 7, 8). The chastisement of v. 8 is the instrument of purification.

The fruit. That is, the result. The “fruit” of chastisement, repentance, and forgiveness will be the removal of every vestige of idolatry. The Babylonian captivity cured the Jews of idolatry (PK 705).

As chalkstones. The stones of the altars will be crushed as if they were chalk, and the groves (Heb. *’asherim*; see on Ex. 34:13; Deut. 7:5; 16:21; 2 Kings 17:10) and idols will be cast down and destroyed. God permits trials to come upon His people in order to purge them of their iniquities.

10. The defenced city. That is, Jerusalem, as symbolic of God’s people. What was now a flourishing city would become a wilderness. Where houses now stood there would be pasture (see ch. 7:23–25). This prediction came true a century later, in 586 B.C. (see Dan. 9:16, 17).

11. Set them on fire. This is a continuation of the concluding picture of the preceding verse. A tree whose branches are stripped of leaves (v. 10) withers and dies. The wood becomes dry. The branches are then cut down and used for firewood. The figure is similar to that of Eze. 31:12, 13, where the fall of Assyria is compared to a tree whose branches have fallen. John the Baptist and Jesus both compared the wicked to trees that were cut down and cast into the fire (Matt. 3:10; John 15:6). Paul compared the literal Jews to natural branches cut off and replaced by the grafted branches of the church (Rom. 11:12–20).

12. In that day. See on ch. 26:1, 2.

Beat off. Literally, “beat out,” that is. “thresh [grain],” in order to separate it from the chaff. This is the great day of judgment, when the wheat is gathered into the heavenly garner and the chaff is burned (Joel 3:13; Matt. 3:12; 13:39, 40; Rev. 14:14–19).

The river. That is, the Euphrates.

The stream of Egypt. The land promised to Israel extended from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt (see on Gen. 15:18; 1 Kings 4:21; 8:65). The nations within these boundaries would be “threshed” and their lands given to God’s chosen people.

One by one. God gathers the righteous one by one, not as groups, but as individuals.

13. In that day. See on ch. 26:1. For comment, see on ch. 11:16. Concerning the restoration of Israel from captivity, see pp. 29, 31.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2, 3 PK 22

3 COL 218; FE 264

5 AH 207, 214; CG 478; CH 539; COL 156, 388, 418; CS 87; CT 156, 488; DA 259; FE 465; GC 619; MB 144; MH 90, 248; ML 14, 316, 318; MM 42, 287; PK 326, 587, 719; PP 726; SR 98; Te 195; TM 191; 2T 287; 3T 240; 5T 471; 8T 177

6 PK 22, 703

CHAPTER 28

1 *The prophet threateneth Ephraim for their pride and drunkenness. 5 The residue shall be advanced in the kingdom of Christ. 7 He rebuketh their error. 9 Their untowardness to learn, 14 and their security. 16 Christ the sure foundation is promised. 18 Their security shall be tried. 23 They are incited to the consideration of God’s discreet providence.*

1. The crown of pride. Or, “the proud crown.”

The drunkards of Ephraim. This chapter is Isaiah’s only message of reproof specifically addressed to the northern kingdom (though Jerusalem is also mentioned in v. 14). It must therefore have been given before the capture of Samaria by the Assyrians in

723/722. Samaria, the “proud crown” of a nation of drunkards, was rebuked more than once for drunkenness (Amos 4:1, 2; 6:1, 6). The prophets frequently issued warnings against this vice (Isa. 5:11, 12; 28:7, 8). However, as the context makes apparent, Isaiah refers primarily to the leaders of the northern kingdom, who were drunk both literally and figuratively and incapable of guiding the nation in harmony with God’s will.

A fading flower. From the death of Jeroboam II in 753 until the fall of the kingdom 30 years later, the waning strength and glory of Israel were plain for all to see. The kingdom was rapidly disintegrating (see on 2 Kings 15:29; 1 Chron. 5:26). When Isaiah bore this message it was, indeed, “a fading flower.”

The fat valleys. Samaria stood on a hill situated in a beautiful and fertile valley.

2. Strong one. That is, Assyria, the “rod” of God’s “anger” (see on chs. 7:17–20; 10:5).

3. Trodden. That is, by the Assyrian invaders.

4. Hasty fruit. Literally, “early figs” (see on Mark 11:13). The regular crop ripened in the month of August. The earliest figs, which ripened in June, were considered a special delicacy (see Hosea 9:10; Micah 7:1). These would be eagerly seized and quickly devoured. Thus it was to be with Samaria.

5. The residue. When Israel fell, the people of Judah remained comparatively true to the Lord, and to them the Lord was a glorious crown. For Judah’s relationship to God after the fall of Israel, see Hosea 1:6, 7; 4:15–17; 11:12.

6. Spirit of judgment. God gave good king Hezekiah a spirit of wisdom and sound judgment which in times of crisis enabled him to make wise decisions that saved his nation from the fate that overwhelmed Israel to the north. This same discerning spirit is promised to God’s leaders today.

To the gate. Or, “at the gate.” The Assyrians had advanced to the very gates of Jerusalem, and its fall appeared inevitable, but the Lord turned back the Assyrian hordes and Judah was saved (see ch. 37:35–37).

7. They also have erred. The people of Judah, particularly its leaders, had also become enslaved to wine. Even the priests and prophets, who should have set a perfect example, were misled. In their drunken stupor they staggered and wandered out of the way. False prophets were intoxicated as they gave their counterfeit messages, and priests stumbled in their sacred ministrations. Having given themselves over to wine and strong drink, they were no longer able to “put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean” (Lev. 10:9, 10).

Swallowed up. Literally, “confused.” They could not think clearly or logically.

8. No place clean. The most revolting features of drunkenness are pictured (see v. 8). Priests and people were defiled, both literally and spiritually.

9. Whom shall he teach? The priests and prophets whose business it was to teach the people were themselves misled, and therefore in no position to carry out their responsibilities (see on Matt. 23:16). They were so befogged that God could not teach them. It was necessary, therefore, that they be put aside and new leaders chosen—men who were both meek and willing, alert and spiritual-minded. The old leaders whose minds were spiritually befogged must be replaced by men to whom God could speak His messages of truth and wisdom. These might be regarded as babes by the learned priests, but they were humble and teachable and able to learn the ways of God.

10. Precept upon precept. Truth must be presented clearly and logically, one point leading naturally on to another. Only thus can men become thoroughly acquainted with truth. Instruction must be given as if to children, by repeating the same point again and again, and going on from one point to another by easy and gentle degrees as men whose minds have been darkened by sin are able to follow. Such instruction may appear simple, but it is effective.

11. Another tongue. That is, “a foreign language.” God had spoken to His people in their own tongue through His messengers the prophets, but they did not listen. Now He would speak to them by other means, first the Assyrians and later the Babylonians, the Persians, and the Romans. In 1 Cor. 14:21 Paul applies this scripture to men whose speech was unintelligible to the hearers.

12. This is the rest. Only by hearing and obeying the revealed will of God may true rest be found. Jesus invited the weary to come to Him, and promised to give them rest (Matt. 11:28). But Israel and Judah refused to listen (see on Isa. 6:9, 10), and thus did not find the rest that might have been theirs. See also on Heb. 3:18, 19; 4:1–11.

13. Fall backward. God had spoken to His people clearly and simply, and they were without excuse. But His counsels, which were intended to bring blessing, now stood to witness against them. The “chief corner stone” of truth had become to them “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence” (1 Peter 2:6–8; cf. Isa. 28:16). What had been given to help men became the occasion of their fall (see on Rom. 7:10).

14. Ye scornful men. Or, “you scoffers.” The leaders of God’s people scorned His instruction and scoffed at the warnings given them. Isaiah was addressing the very men who in their worldly wisdom had derided his teachings and persisted in advocating a policy that would result in national ruin. In words of bitter reproach these leaders are now taken to task and told in unmistakable language of the fate that awaits them (see on vs. 21–23).

15. Ye have said. The scoffers of v. 14 are speaking, and this is their scornful reply to the solemn message of warning recorded in vs. 1–13.

A covenant with death. Isaiah had warned that these men would “fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken” (v. 13). But the scoffers only laughed and expressed unconcern. Death, they say, has agreed to let them live on in spite of the decrees of Heaven. “We will not surely die for our misdeeds!” (see on Gen. 3:4).

Hell. Heb. *she’ol*, the figurative realm of the dead (see on Prov. 15:11). *She’ol* is figuratively presented as a foreign nation with which the “scornful men” had made a treaty. “Death” is its king.

So vile and reprobate were these leaders of the professed people of God that they openly scorned truth and righteousness. Wicked king Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, made a league with Assyria and openly accepted the Assyrian gods and worship; in fact he replaced the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem with a heathen altar (2 Kings 16:7–18). By serving the devil they hoped to escape his scourges.

The overflowing scourge. That is, the divine judgments Isaiah had predicted (see ch. 8:8).

Lies our refuge. These scoffers speak of their own beliefs and policies as “lies.” They know that they are speaking falsehoods, but for reasons of their own they would rather deal in falsehood than in truth.

16. Zion. See on Ps. 48:2.

A foundation. Utterly deceived, the leaders of Judah were building upon a foundation of sand. Ruin and destruction would inevitably be the lot of the nation if the leaders continued to have their way (see on ch. 3:12). A better foundation was needed.

A precious corner stone. This was to be none other than the Messiah (see Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:10, 11; Rom. 9:33; Eph. 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6–8). Here was a tested Stone upon which the church could safely stand. Whatever storms might dash against the structure erected upon that foundation, it would never give way (see on Matt. 7:24–27). For the nature and use of ancient cornerstones, see on Matt. 21:42. For Christ as the Rock on which the church is built, see on Matt. 16:18.

Not make haste. The Hebrew expression may also mean, “not become alarmed,” “not act on impulse.” He who rests his faith in Christ may move forward in perfect confidence and trust; he will never have need for precipitate flight. He will not become alarmed in the midst of trying circumstances, but will trust in God (see on ch. 26:3, 4).

17. Judgment also. Literally, the clause reads, “I will set up justice as a measuring line.” Injustice prevailed, but Messiah (see on v. 16) would restore to men a knowledge of what constitutes right conduct toward God and toward their fellow men (see on Matt. 5:19–22) by magnifying the law and making it honorable (Isa. 42:21). Isaiah here continues the imagery of v. 16, drawn from the construction of a building. God’s church would have Christ for its “corner stone,” and be required to meet His standards of justice and righteousness (see on Micah 6:8; cf. 1 Peter 2:5–10).

Plummet. A plumb line is used to determine whether walls, windows, and doors are truly vertical, and thus in line with the foundation.

Hail shall sweep away. Only a structure built upon Christ and His standards of justice, righteousness, and truth can stand secure (see on Matt. 7:24–27). Those who build upon a foundation of falsehood will find that their structure cannot withstand the tests of time. Compare also Rev. 16:21.

The hiding place. That is, the “refuge” of “lies” (see on v. 15).

18. Covenant with death. See on v. 15. Plans that ignore God will eventually leave the planners bitterly disappointed.

19. From the time that it goeth forth. Or, “when it passes through,” or “as often as it passes through.” The prophet continues his figure of a flood beating against a house. The scoffers (v. 14) thought such a flood would never come and that their structure of lies would stand (see Matt. 7:26, 27; cf. 2 Peter 3:3–7). When men come to their senses there is a sad awakening, for their house of lies crumbles about them (see GC 562).

A vexation. Only when it is too late will these scoffers understand the “report,” or “message,” that Isaiah now bears against them (see Jer. 8:20), and it would “only,” or without exception, cause them “vexation,” that is, terror.

20. The bed is shorter. The figure again changes. The “bed” represents the policy followed by the leaders of Judah. This policy, they claimed, would bring rest and peace to the nation. But, Isaiah warns, it would prove insufficient to meet their needs. They fell short of grasping the true nature of their condition as a nation and did not realize the kind of remedy, or “bed,” necessary to provide for the national welfare. Their schemes were too narrow to cope with the demands of the predicament in which the people found themselves. The devices in which they trusted would not save them. The supposedly clever, but evil, schemes to which men so frequently resort are certain to bring nothing

but disappointment and vexation of spirit. The only sure refuge in time of trouble is to trust in the Lord and do what is right (see Ps. 37:3).

21. As in mount Perazim. When David had been anointed king the Philistines came against him, but were smitten at Perazim and Gibeon (1 Chron. 14:8–16). As the Lord had manifested Himself in overwhelming David’s enemies, so He would subdue the enemies of Zion in the last days.

His strange work. God is, by nature, merciful, gracious, and long-suffering (Ex. 34:6, 7; Eze. 18:23, 32; 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9). It is alien to His character to inflict pain and suffering, punishment and death, upon His creatures. But at the same time He will “by no means clear the guilty” (Ex. 34:7). Sometimes divine justice seems so long delayed that men conclude it will never come (Eccl. 8:11; Zeph. 1:12; Mal. 2:17; 3:14), and that they may go on in their evil ways with impunity. All who thus presume to take advantage of God’s long-suffering and mercy are here warned that judgment is sure to come (see Eze. 12:21–28; see on Isa. 28:14, 22, 23). When Christ appears as a warrior to subdue His enemies (Rev. 19:11–21), men will see Him acting in a role that appears vastly different from anything they have known before. The Lamb of God will then appear as “the Lion of the tribe of Juda” (Rev. 5:5, 6).

22. Be ye not mockers. See on v. 15. Do not scoff at the warnings of coming destruction, Isaiah pleads.

Bands be made strong. Resistance would only add to their guilt and increase their punishment (see Jer. 28:10, 13).

A consumption, even determined. Literally, “a decision to annihilate,” that is, to eradicate sin and to extirpate sinners from the earth.

23. Give ye ear. In vs. 23–29 Isaiah sets forth a lesson drawn from the round of farm life—plowing, sowing, and threshing—but leaves the reader to interpret the parable. As there is an appropriate time for each of these agricultural processes, so the heavenly Husbandman will, at the appropriate season, deal with men (see Isa. 5:1–7; James 5:7). The scoffers (Isa. 28:14, 21, 22) would be wise not to deceive themselves into thinking that the time of harvest can be postponed indefinitely. God deals with men according to their individual needs, now in judgment, now in mercy, but always with each according to what is best for him (see DA 224, 330; MB 150).

24. Plow all day. No wise tiller of the soil will spend all his time in either plowing or sowing, important as these processes are. But it is essential that each operation be performed at the right time. None of these processes goes on forever; thus it is with the heavenly Husbandman.

25. Made plain the face. That is, “smoothed the surface.” Each kind of seed is sown in its own particular way in the place prepared for it. One kind of seed is scattered broadcast, another sown in rows, and yet another drilled. God adapts His dealings with men according to what is best for each.

Fitches. Heb. *qeşach*, formerly thought to be an herb cultivated as a forage plant, but more recently identified as *Nigella sativa*, or black cummin, more commonly called fennelflower, or nutmeg flower. This plant grows about 1 1/2 ft. high and generally has yellow blossoms (though sometimes blue). Its numerous black, acrid, aromatic seeds are used in the Orient as a seasoning and also as an aid to digestion. The English word “fitch” is the same as “vetch.”

Cummin. Heb. *kammon*, the “cummin” of NT times, also, *Cuminum cyminum* (see on Matt. 23:23). In flavor and appearance it resembles caraway seeds, but is less palatable. Like the black cummin, it is also used in the Orient as an aid to digestion.

The principal wheat. Literally, “millet [?] wheat,” a grain inferior to wheat and commonly used by the poorer classes.

The appointed barley. The meaning of the word translated “appointed” is unknown.

Rie. Rather, “spelt,” a kind of wild wheat, of inferior quality.

In their place. Literally, “set as a border.”

27. Fitches are not threshed. A farmer who used a heavy cart with spiked wheels to thresh out seeds for which a light beating with a rod was sufficient, would be considered foolish. Isaiah’s point is that some individuals, like the fitch and the cummin, respond satisfactorily to a light threshing. The Lord can deal much more gently with them than He does with others.

28. Bread corn is bruised. Preferably considered as a question, “Does one crush bread grain?” (RSV), as the construction of the next clause implies. The object of threshing is not to crush and ruin the grain, but to separate it from the chaff. However, the light method used in threshing cummin (see on v. 27) would be ineffective for threshing grains used for making bread. With wheat, millet, spelt, and barley, carts with heavy wheels were often employed, or horses or cattle were driven over the grain. Similarly, the Lord must employ more severe methods in dealing with some than He does with others. But even the heaviest chastisements do not go on forever. God’s object is not destruction; He designs only to separate the worthless chaff from the valuable grain. When this object has been achieved, the work of threshing ceases.

29. Wonderful in counsel. The judgments of God are not dictated by revenge, but by justice and wisdom. As men come to understand the ways of God, they will find Him to be, indeed, a Wonderful Counselor (ch. 9:6).

Excellent in working. Literally, “he causes effective working to be great.” God is not only omniscient, but also omnipotent; not only all-wise, but all-powerful. He is not only “wonderful in counsel,” but also “excellent in working” out the counsels of His will.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 GC 301, 650; PK 733

9–13TM 418

9–17TM 383

10 AA 206; AH 232, 289, 481; CE 37; CG 185; CSW 68; CT 42, 129, 169; Ed 123; Ev 51, 152, 199, 201, 338, 344; FE 141, 268, 288; ML 34; PK 325; Te 158, 169, 244; 1T 156, 390; 2T 420, 536, 605; 3T 565; 4T 127; 5T 665; 6T 68, 196, 416; 7T 66, 73, 136; 8T 161, 298; 9T 105, 126, 134, 240; WM 77

13 5T 691

15 GC 560; 5T 82; 6T 195

16 DA 413, 598; MB 152

16, 17 MB 151

17 Ed 178; TM 182, 384

17, 18 GC 562

21 DA 582; GC 627; PP 139, 628; 5T 77

21, 22 TM 384, 420

23–29CT 314

26 Ed 219
26, 29 FE 326; LS 355; MH 199
29 4T 539

CHAPTER 29

1 *God's heavy judgment upon Jerusalem. 7 The unsatiableness of her enemies. 9 The senselessness, 13 and deep hypocrisy of the Jews. 18 A promise of sanctification to the godly.*

1. Ariel. A symbolic name here applied to Jerusalem or to one section of it. The word is of uncertain derivation and meaning, and may have been coined by Isaiah. It may have been a cryptic word comparable to Sheshach (Jer. 25:26), which stood for Babel (see on Jer. 51:41). There is a possibility that the name meant "altar of God" (see Eze. 43:15, 16, where the word is translated "altar"). Others have suggested the translation "lion of God." This and the following chapters seem to refer to Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and his abortive siege of Jerusalem. Before the Assyrian invasion God gave clear warnings of the terrors that lay ahead. The Jews were upbraided for their hypocrisy, stubbornness, and failure to understand the import of coming events.

Add ye year to year. The people were going about their affairs entirely without concern for the future, as if one year would follow another with no change in the pleasant routine of life. They went through the annual round of feasts and kept worshipping at the Temple, yet all the while engaging in crimes that threatened the nation with destruction (see ch. 1:4, 10–13, 21–23).

Let them kill sacrifices. Literally, "the feasts run their round."

2. Unto me as Ariel. The Lord has pronounced judgment upon Jerusalem, and the city will be to Him as "Ariel"—perhaps as an "altar" (see on v. 1) on which its inhabitants would be the sacrifice (see Eze. 11:3, 7).

3. I will camp against thee. Jerusalem, pictured as under siege. Scenes such as the one described here often appear depicted on Assyrian sculptures (see on Eze. 4:2; see Vol. II, illustration facing p. 64). A ramp was thrown up against the walls of the city, and siege engines were brought up to batter down the defenses (see Jer. 33:4; Eze. 4:2). This is a good description of the method by which Sennacherib planned to take Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 19:32).

4. Be brought down. Jerusalem, though not to be taken, was to be humbled in the dust. In abject humility Hezekiah sent his ambassadors to the Assyrian king, acknowledging himself to be in error, bespeaking his favor, and expressing his willingness to accept such demands as might be made of him (2 Kings 18:14). Jerusalem is compared to a captured enemy groveling before his captor with his face in the dust and muttering vows of submission, in the hope of saving his life (see on Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:11).

5. Strangers. That is, the enemies surrounding the city.

At an instant. For the sudden and unexpected deliverance of Jerusalem see ch. 37:36.

6. Thou shalt be visited. Jerusalem was to be visited with the judgments of God. Similar language is frequently employed in describing moments when God reveals Himself (Ex. 19:16; Ps. 77:18; Heb. 12:18, 19; Rev. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18). Here the words may be a figurative representation of the terrors of war, or they may be a literal description of some terrible convulsion of nature that burst upon the Assyrian hosts (see on 2 Kings 19:35).

7. *A dream.* A dream quickly comes and quickly goes. The Assyrian forces would vanish like a dream (Ps. 73:19, 20).

8. *An hungry man.* In their imagination the Assyrians had already swallowed up Jerusalem. Sennacherib was certain of triumph, but God suddenly disappointed his hopes by wiping out his besieging army and sending him home empty-handed (see ch. 37:36, 37).

9. *Stay yourselves.* Isaiah invites the people of Jerusalem to pause in their round of activities to consider the true nature of their situation.

Wonder. Literally, “look in astonishment at one another.”

Cry ye out, and cry. Literally, “gaze [anxiously] about, and look.”

Drunken, but not with wine. From the Assyrian hosts Isaiah turns once more to the people of Jerusalem. He had delivered them a message that might well have made them tremble, but they were like men in a stupor, unable to sense the solemn import of the warning. Sense and reason had been lost, not because of intoxication, but because they were so engrossed with the affairs of earth that they could not comprehend the message from Heaven (see on v. 1).

10. *Closed your eyes.* See on ch. 6:9, 10. The people of Judah were groping about blindly, as if in a stupor (see on v. 9). The eyes of their understanding were darkened. Their rulers, whose business it was to guide the affairs of state, had lost all sense of direction. Their seers, who divined for money, were utterly blind. God had sent them message after message, but with each rejection of light from Heaven they blinded themselves more and more, and their perception of truth became increasingly dull. It was in this sense that the Lord had “closed” their eyes (see on Ex. 4:21).

11. *The vision of all.* That is, all that Isaiah had spoken to them.

A book that is sealed. In ancient times documents were commonly rolled up and sealed (see on Neh. 9:38; see also illustration facing p. 80, Vol. III). Isaiah’s solemn messages proved to be of no more value to the people of Jerusalem than if the prophet had written them out and sealed them up so that their message could not be read. Unbelief and disobedience had shut away Heaven’s light as effectively as if it had never been revealed. To men who refuse to study it or who refuse to believe its solemn warnings, the Bible is a sealed book. The prophets have given the world inspired messages of light and hope, but today, as then, the world walks on in darkness because it refuses to see (see on Hosea 4:6).

12. *Him that is not learned.* That is, one who makes no profession of understanding the ways of God, as did the prophets of v. 10. A man may be wise in the ways of the world but unlearned in the things of God. At the same time a man may be a mere novice in worldly learning and yet wise in the ways of God. Prejudice and unbelief close the eyes of man’s spiritual understanding to what God has revealed for the enlightenment and blessing of the world.

13. *With their lips.* The people of Jerusalem made a labored pretense of religion, but in their hearts they did not even know God. Thus it was also in the days of Christ (see on Matt. 7:21–23; 15:8, 9; Matt. 23:4; Mark 7:6–9). The people were hypocrites (see on Matt. 6:2). Their worship consisted of ritual utterly devoid of true communion with Heaven (see 2 Tim. 3:5). They looked upon their outward performance as meeting the requirements God had made, and thought thereby to merit divine favor (see on Micah 6:6–8).

14. Wisdom of their wise men. When men leave God out of their reckoning their wisdom turns to folly. Not loving the light, they are left to walk in darkness (see 2 Thess. 2:12; cf. Hosea 4:6). This proved to be the experience of the Jewish leaders. They darkened counsel by “words without knowledge” (Job 38:2), and the light of the nation was doomed to go out in darkness.

15. Who seeth? They sought to hide their hypocritical attitude, motives, and actions, in the hope that neither men nor God would detect their true character.

16. Upside down. They were attempting, as it were, to have the potter take orders from the clay. They regarded themselves as having wisdom greater than that of the Creator. These spiritual leaders were virtual atheists, who masqueraded under the guise of religion.

17. Yet a very little while. Isaiah was a prophet of hope as well as of doom. He was a true optimist. He saw not only the darkness of the present but also the glorious light of the future (see on ch. 9:2). Though Judah might perish and its fruitful fields become barren, the time was coming when the earth would again be replenished, when the wilderness would become “a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest” (ch. 32:15; see also chs. 35:1; 41:17–19; 55:13).

18. The blind shall see. See on ch. 6:9, 10. Isaiah foresees a time when the conditions of vs. 10–12 would be reversed. Compare Isa. 35:5, 6; 42:7; 52:15; 60:1–5; Luke 1:79; 4:18; John 8:12; Acts 26:17, 18; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 1:18.

19. The meek also. The time would come when the gospel would go to all peoples of earth, the small as well as the great, and the poor as well as the rich (see pp. 28–30).

20. The terrible one. The enemy of God and of His people. Probably a reference to Sennacherib and his arrogant message (see v. 5; cf. ch. 25:4, 5). The truth here stated applies to every enemy who opposes the onward progress of the work of God.

21. Make a man an offender. Perhaps Isaiah had been accused of a lack of patriotism because of his messages of reproof and warning. Those who are reprovved turn against their reprovers and endeavor to devise means, however unfair, of entrapping these representatives of God in order to bring about their downfall and silence their voice of reproof.

Turn aside the just. That is, plan a deliberate miscarriage of justice (see Ex. 23:6; Amos 5:12; Mal. 3:5).

A thing of nought. Heb. *tohu*, translated “without form” in Gen. 1:2. The accusations brought to make the reprover appear as an offender were utterly without basis in fact.

22. Not now be ashamed. Abraham and Jacob here represent all the true people of God. As the Lord had delivered the fathers of the nation, so He will deliver their descendants from all enemies. Sennacherib’s attack would bring shame and fear, but Isaiah foresaw a brighter day beyond to which the faithful might look forward.

23. Fear the God of Israel. The ultimate triumph of right is here revealed. The “terrible one” (v. 20) has been brought to nought, Jacob is no longer ashamed (v. 22), and his long-lost children have been brought back to the fold. As the faithful of all the earth are brought into the fold they will join Jacob in worshiping and serving the Lord.

24. They that murmured. In Isaiah’s time, as in the wilderness (Ex. 17:2, 7; Num. 14:22; 20:3; Deut. 1:27; 6:16; Ps. 95:10, 11; 106:25). Isaiah proclaims that there is hope for even the most hardened and rebellious.

Shall learn doctrine. Many of those who have erred (see chs. 28:7; 29:10–13) will escape the darkness (ch. 29:18) and profit from the experiences through which they have passed. Although the vast majority of the people would fail to profit by the messages of counsel and warning repeatedly sent them through the messenger of the Lord, there would be a small “remnant” (see chs. 1:9; 11:11, 16; etc.) whose hearts would respond and turn to the Lord.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

9 EW 123; 5T 259
 13 1T 188
 13, 14 8T 78
 13–15TM 382
 13–16TM 96
 18, 19 MH 194; PK 697; 8T 78
 18–21TM 96
 18–24TM 383
 21 TM 408
 22–24AA 382
 24 PK 697
 6

CHAPTER 30

1 *The prophet threateneth the people for their confidence in Egypt, 8 and contempt of God's word. 18 God's mercies towards his church. 27 God's wrath, and the people's joy, in the destruction of Assyria.*

1. Woe to the rebellious children. Isaiah still has Sennacherib's invasion in mind, the time when the Rabshakeh taunted Hezekiah for trusting in Egypt (2 Kings 18:19, 21; Isa. 36:4, 6). The present chapter gives evidence of a considerable group in Judah that favored an alliance with Egypt. Instead of turning to God and placing their trust in Him, these timorous men rebelled against God and turned to the heathen for help.

Add sin to sin. It was because of the sins of Judah that the Assyrian armies had been permitted to come against her in the first place. Now Judah added to her sin in by going to Egypt for help against Assyria.

2. To strengthen. That is, to take refuge in the protection.

The shadow of Egypt. A land of almost perpetual sunshine and not much shade. At this time Egypt was weak, and unable to provide effective help against Assyria. It was but a few years after this that Egypt itself was invaded by the armies of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal (see Vol. II, p. 53). The pro-Egyptian group in Judah that sent to Egypt for help did not ask counsel from God because they knew they were acting contrary to His will. Upon entering the Promised Land, Israel had been forbidden to make treaties with the inhabitants of the land (Ex. 23:32, 33; Deut. 7:2; Judges 2:2). When Joshua made a covenant with the men of Gibeon he did so without asking counsel of God (Joshua 9:14).

3. Your shame. Egypt was a weak nation at this time (see on v. 2). Sennacherib taunted the men of Judah for looking to a nation that was in no position to help them, and

⁶Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 21:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

declared that the “broken reed” of Egypt would pierce the hand of anyone who leaned upon it (Isa. 36:6; 2 Kings 18:21).

4. *Were at Zoan.* Perhaps, “are at Zoan,” a city on the Tanitic branch of the Nile, identified with the modern village of *Ṣân el-Ḥagar*, in the eastern part of the Delta region. Since the Nile Delta is constantly building up, so that the mouths of the Nile are much farther north than they were in Bible times, Zoan was probably on a harbor at the mouth of the river in Moses’ time. The city had been built seven years after Hebron (Num. 13:22). The Hyksos (see on Gen. 39:1; 45:10) made this city their capital, calling it Avaris. It was later given the name Tanis. A century after Isaiah, in the time of Ezekiel, it seems still to have been an important city (Eze. 30:14).

Hanes. Either Heracleopolis in the eastern Delta or Heracleopolis on the west bank of the Nile about 56 mi. (90 km.) south by west from Memphis.

5. *Of a people.* That is, “because of a people.” The Egyptian alliance brought only shame. Its promises of substantial help proved worse than worthless, for it brought down on Judah the wrath of Assyria. It had been the alliance of Hoshea with Egypt and his refusal to pay tribute to Assyria that had, but a few years before, brought Shalmaneser against Samaria (2 Kings 17:4–6).

6. *The beasts of the south.* In this solemn message the prophet graphically portrays the shameless journey of the envoys, with their asses and camels carrying presents, on their way through the Negeb and the Egyptian desert to seek the help of the nation from which God had once delivered them. The land through which they passed was desolate, haunted by wild beasts, vipers, and venomous serpents.

7. *Their strength is to sit still.* Perhaps, “Rahab [Egypt; see on Ps. 87:4; cf. Isa. 51:9], the inactive one.” Egypt would promise assistance, but would not actually do anything when her help was needed.

8. *Note it in a book.* The truth Isaiah was about to utter was fraught with importance far beyond the immediate occasion. In it was a lesson for generations yet to come (see 1 Cor. 10:11). Rahab (see on Isa. 30:7), the dragon (see Isa. 51:9; see on Job 9:13), represented none other than Satan, the great deceiver (Rev. 12:9). Those who forsook the Lord and went to Egypt for help were actually turning to Satan, and in so doing they sought in vain for succor, for Satan was a defeated foe, who could not even save himself. The message to be written on the tablet follows immediately.

For the time to come. The Targums, the Syriac, and the Vulgate read, “for a witness.”

9. *A rebellious people.* Israel had followed Satan in his rebellion and war against God. Like their father before them (John 8:44), they had made lies their refuge (see on Isa. 28:15).

10. *Prophecy deceits.* When Satan was cast out of heaven his one object was to deceive the world (Rev. 12:9). In practicing deceit the people of Judah were following their father the devil. They chose to ignore the prophets of God, whose messages were always unwelcome. So far had these men strayed from truth that they were completely satisfied with error, and demanded messages they knew to be in error.

11. *To cease.* They knew Isaiah to be a true prophet, but wanted nothing to do with him or with God. The very thought of holiness stirred within them feelings of resentment and hatred.

12. Wherefore. God responds to the attitude expressed in vs. 8–11. The people, that is, most of them, will not listen, but the words of Isaiah will testify against them in the day of judgment.

Oppression and perverseness. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “thou shalt rejoice,” for “perverseness.” These wicked men oppress the weak and then boast about what they have done. Justice and a willingness to listen to reason mark the true children of God. By their arrogant refusal to heed Isaiah’s words, these reprobate hearers had given proof of the justice of the sentence now pronounced upon them.

13. A breach ready to fall. A bulge in a high wall warns of a coming crash. The structure these men had built stood on a foundation of sand, and was certain to collapse (see on Matt. 7:26, 27).

14. Potters’ vessel. Once broken in pieces, an earthen pot can never be mended for any practical use. Thus it will be with the unregenerate men of Jerusalem. Utter doom awaits them.

He shall not spare. Meaning, He shall be without compassion.

15. In returning and rest. The only hope of Judah was to turn from evil back to God. In doing so they would find confidence, rest, and peace. In looking to the strength of men they had found only disappointment, trouble, and defeat, but trust in God would bring peace, calmness, and strength.

16. Upon horses. Assyria had introduced cavalry, and the Jews were relying on a supply of these animals, which they felt were necessary in order to resist Assyria. Isaiah declares that the horses will prove useful only to facilitate retreat. In ancient times the horse was used almost exclusively in fighting.

17. At the rebuke of one. God had promised His people that, if faithful to Him, five of them would chase a hundred, and a hundred would “put ten thousand to flight” (Lev. 26:8). Because of Judah’s perversity, however, the promised blessing would be reversed. During the time of Isaiah, Piankhi of Egypt (see Vol. II, pp. 52, 77) made the proud boast that with the help of his god, Amen, “many shall turn their backs on a few, and one shall rout a thousand.” With a taunting reproach, however, Isaiah proclaimed that those who flee will be the forces of Egypt, in which the reprobate Jews were placing their trust.

As a beacon. Judah would then be left alone like a solitary tree on a mountain peak, or like a flagstaff on a lofty hill. All passers-by could see the terrible fruitage of transgression.

18. Therefore. God was reluctant to bring upon His erring children the judgments with which He threatened them, and would graciously give them every possible opportunity for repentance and salvation.

19. Dwell in Zion. These comforting words addressed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem seem especially appropriate to the period of anxiety and distress following the fall of Samaria and the captivity of Israel. The dwellers in Zion are now given the assurance that they will not suffer the same fate that has befallen their northern neighbors. God will hear their cries, and will save them and their city (see ch. 37:21–36).

20. The bread of adversity. This prediction was fulfilled during Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah, when only Jerusalem remained.

Be removed into a corner. Literally, “hide himself.” The judgments about to fall upon the land would make it appear that God had forsaken them (see Ps. 13:1; 83:1; etc.). Eventually Judah’s faithful teachers, Isaiah and his fellow workers, would be recognized

and their faith rewarded. They and their messages would be vindicated when God should deliver Jerusalem.

21. *Hear a word.* God would grant them the guidance of His Spirit to direct them aright and correct them when they were about to go astray. All who will may hear this “still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12) if they will but listen.

22. *Thy graven images.* With zeal for God, Hezekiah and the devout of Judah would go forth to destroy their graven images and all the monuments of idolatry (see 2 Chron. 31:1). These objects of worship would be cast away as utterly worthless. As the perverse inhabitants of Jerusalem wanted nothing more to do with the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 30:11), the faithful remnant would want nothing to do with idolatry.

23. *Give the rain.* The rain after seed sowing was the “former rain” (see on Joel 2:23), which came in the autumn (see Vol. II, pp. 108, 109). The promise here includes both temporal and spiritual blessings. The nation would receive blessings in basket and in store, in the fruits of the ground and in the increase of their cattle and flocks (Deut. 28:3–5; Joel 2:24–26), and they would, in addition, enjoy an outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:17, 18).

24. *That ear the ground.* Literally, “that till the ground” (see on Gen. 45:6). In Old English “to ear” meant “to till.”

Clean provender. Literally, “mixed fodder,” or “moistened fodder,” that is, “mash,” presumably a superior type of feed for cattle. The lowliest of cattle, the oxen and asses that plow the ground, would have the best of feed. Ordinarily, they were fed barley mixed with hay or straw, but “then” (v. 23), says Isaiah, even the lowly asses would be fed the finest of winnowed grain mixed, perhaps, with salt or alkaline herbs. The point is that this would be evidence of the greatest of plenty. Human beings would, accordingly, fare incomparably better.

The fan. That is, the winnowing fork (see on Matt. 3:12).

25. *Streams of waters.* Isaiah sees the mountains and hills, usually dry and barren, supplied with streams. Even the most unlikely places would yield an abundant harvest. The prophet foresees a golden age in which the earth is to be restored to its original fertility and beauty. Similarly, God would have the earth watered with rich supplies of heavenly grace, transforming the world’s dry and barren wastes into beautiful gardens and flourishing fields (see Isa. 35:1, 2; 41:17–19; 43:19, 20; 44:3, 4; 55:1; John 4:10, 13, 14; John 7:37–39).

The day. That is, the day when God would subdue all His enemies (see Isa. 66:16; Jer. 25:33; Zech. 14:1–3, 8, 9; etc; see also p. 30).

Towers fall. That is, the fortified towers guarding the walls of enemy cities. Compare the fall of mystical Babylon (Jer. 51:8, 29; Rev. 16:19; 18:21; see on Isa. 13:1–18).

26. *Light of the sun.* Isaiah describes a world in which there is no intervening veil to bar the light of moon or sun (see Zech. 14:6, 7; Rev. 21:23).

Sevenfold. Whether this means an exact sevenfold increase in the amount of light visible, or whether “sevenfold” means simply a great increase of light, or perfection qualitatively rather than quantitatively, cannot be determined.

27. *Name of the Lord.* The Lord comes forth to champion the cause of His beleaguered people (see Rev. 19:11–21; GC 633, 642, 656; 6T 406). It is Christ who bears the name of God (Ex. 23:21).

Full of indignation. The hour of God's indignation will be the time of the seven last plagues (Rev. 15:1, 7; 16:1). When Christ comes again He will slay the wicked with "the breath of his lips" (Isa. 11:4), with flames of fire (Ps. 50:3; 97:3; 2 Peter 3:10).

28. An overflowing stream. Christ's wrath is pictured as sweeping on with the force of a stream, carrying everything before it (see ch. 8:8).

To sift the nations. The wheat is to be separated from the worthless chaff (see on Matt. 3:12; 13:38–40). The chaff, being burned, is reduced to vanity, or nothingness (see on Eccl. 1:2), and the instrument employed in the process of separation is, therefore, termed a "sieve of vanity."

A bridle. Again the figure changes, and the nations are pictured as under the control of a power that impels them on to destruction against their will.

29. A holy solemnity. The sacred feast here alluded to is probably the Feast of Tabernacles, in the autumn when the fruits had been gathered (Lev. 23:34, 39–43; Neh. 8:14–18). This was an occasion of great joy. In later times the feast included a night ritual in which the court of the Temple was illuminated by great lamps hoisted atop two lofty standards, which shed their beams far across the city (see DA 463). The Feast of Tabernacles was often termed "the feast" (1 Kings 8:2; 2 Chron. 7:8, 9). The ceremony of the lights commemorated the pillar of light that guided Israel in their march through the desert and pointed forward to the coming of Messiah as the Light of the world. On this occasion the people made their way with great happiness of spirit to Jerusalem, singing sacred songs and playing pipes.

The mighty One of Israel. Literally, "the Rock of Israel" (see Deut. 32:4; Ps. 18:2, 31, 46; etc.; Isa. 2:10; 17:10).

30. His glorious voice. In highly figurative language Isaiah depicts the defeat of the Assyrian hosts (see v. 31). Similar language is used elsewhere to describe actual events at the second coming of Christ (Rev. 16:18–21; 19:15).

The lighting down. Literally, "the descent."

Scattering. Literally, "bursting [of clouds]."

31. The Assyrian. In Isaiah's time Assyria was Judah's greatest enemy. The prediction made here points to the destruction of Sennacherib's army (see ch. 37:36). As the Assyrian smote with a rod, so he would be smitten with the rod of God's wrath. Similarly, all the wicked will finally be smitten with a "rod of iron" (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; cf. Isa. 19:15).

32. The grounded staff. The Hebrew text of the first clause of v. 32 is obscure. A number of ancient manuscripts read "every stroke of the staff of chastisement." According to this reading, every stroke of divine judgment upon Assyria will be greeted by songs of victory and rejoicing on the part of God's people.

33. Tophet. The destruction of Sennacherib's army is referred to once more, in highly figurative language (see on v. 30). This name was given the Valley of Hinnom, on the south of Jerusalem, where human beings, particularly children, were sacrificed to Molech (see on 2 Kings 16:3; 23:10; Jer. 7:31; cf. Jer. 19:6, 11–13). It became symbolic of the fires of the last day. The Greek transliteration of the Heb. *Ge Hinnom*, Valley of Hinnom—*Geenna*—is always translated "hell" in the NT (see on Matt. 5:22). Here, Tophet is pictured as the place where the enemies of the Lord are to be consumed with fire (see Isa. 33:14; Heb. 12:29; Rev. 20:9).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1, 2 TM 380
8–13 TM 382
10 EW 228, 273; 1T 249, 321; 2T 440; 3T 259; 4T 13, 167, 231; 5T 430, 678
10–13 TM 89
11 GC 28
15 MB 101; MYP 97; PK 596; TM 89, 383; SC 71
18 5T 195
18, 19 CH 456
20 PK 723
21 CM 126; FE 188, 526; MB 118; MH 439; ML 42, 88; TM 211; 4T 444; 7T 213; 8T 305
24 1T 229, 334, 414; 6T 56; 7T 153
26 MH 506; 8T 42
28–32 PK 366
29, 30 GC 635
30 EW 15, 285
33 SR 428

CHAPTER 31

- 1 *The prophets sheweth the cursed folly in trusting to Egypt, and forsaking of God. 6 He exhorteth to conversion. 8 He sheweth the fall of Assyria.*

1. Go down to Egypt. Isaiah continues (see ch. 30:2–7) rebuke of the leaders of Judah for turning to Egypt for help against Assyria. Judah was so weak in cavalry that the Assyrians tauntingly offered to provide 2,000 horses if Hezekiah could set riders upon them (ch. 36:8). The Hebrew politicians sought to make up for this weakness by an appeal to Egypt.

Stay on horses. That is, “depend on horses.” In ancient times horses were used almost exclusively for warfare. God, who had once given Israel a signal triumph over the horses and chariots of Pharaoh (Ex. 14:9, 17, 18, 23, 27; 15:19), was forgotten, and Egypt, now a relatively weak nation (see Vol. II, p. 53), was looked to as a source of help.

2. Yet he also is wise. There is a note of sarcasm in these words. Those who sought help from Egypt thought their policy a wise one. But Isaiah reminds them that God also is wise, and that He is able to carry out His threats against those who despise His word.

3. The Egyptians are men. In spite of all their vaunted wisdom and their material resources the Egyptians were still human. Isaiah here drives the point home that the strength of a nation consists not in its material advantages but in the moral and spiritual stamina of its leaders and people.

4. Like as the lion. A vivid illustration of God’s power and protecting care.

5. Flying. Or, “hovering,” as a bird over its young with outspread wings. Likewise the Lord will protect Jerusalem from harm (see Ps. 57:1; 91:4).

Passing over. Heb. *pasach*, the same word used in Ex. 12:13, 23, 27 of the Lord passing over His people; hence the name “Passover.” Perhaps, in using the word *pasach*, Isaiah intends to remind his contemporaries of the great deliverance experienced by their forefathers.

6. Turn ye unto him. Isaiah's one great objective was to bring the people of Judah back to God and thus save the nation. Unless they were turned from their present course they would suffer the recent fate of Israel (2 Kings 17:6).

7. Cast away his idols. In ch. 2:20 the people are pictured disposing of their idols when it is too late. Now they do so in a spirit of penitence, and return to the Lord (2 Chron. 31:1).

8. Then shall the Assyrian fall. It was not the hand of man that destroyed the army of Sennacherib, but the hand of God (ch. 37:36). The "sword" was the judgment from the Lord (Deut. 32:41, 42; 1 Chron. 21:16; Isa. 34:5, 6; 66:16; Jer. 9:16; Eze. 9:1; 21:9–14, 20).

Discomfited. Literally, "for forced labor."

9. He shall pass over. The first clause reads literally, "His rock [meaning "his shelter," or "his stronghold"] shall pass away [on account of] horror." For the Heb. *sela'*, "rock," see on Ps. 18:2. The "rock" of Assyria's strength would fail.

His princes. That is, the "officers" of the Assyrian army, who would literally "be disheartened from the standard," or "desert the standard" (RSV), as they realized that God was defending Zion.

Whose fire is in Zion. The Lord is pictured as a "devouring fire" (Isa. 33:14; Heb. 12:29). When the Assyrians attacked Jerusalem they would be "devoured." The figurative "fire" of Isaiah's time will be literal fire at the time of the attack on the New Jerusalem at the close of the 1,000 years (Rev. 20:9; cf. Zech. 14:2, 3).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 PK 333

CHAPTER 32

1 *The blessings of Christ's kingdom. 9 Desolation is foreshewn. 15 Restoration is promised to succeed.*

1. Reign in righteousness. Isaiah turns from the imminent Assyrian attack on Jerusalem (ch. 31:8, 9) to the time of peace that was to follow. The withdrawal of Sennacherib in 701 was followed by a number of years of peace under the just rule of Hezekiah (see Vol. II, pp. 87, 88). In a similar way the overthrow of all the forces of Satan will be followed by Christ's eternal reign in righteousness and glory. As usual, the prophetic picture of peace and security following upon tribulation blends into a description of the glories of the world to come, the Messianic age. In this Messianic setting the "king" is Christ.

2. A man. The Messiah would be to His people a source of comfort, contentment, and rest, a place of protection and shelter. In the dry and burning desert He would be as a life-giving stream, the cooling shade of a great rock.

3. Not be dim. The situation foretold in ch. 6:9, 10 is to be reversed. The eyes of man's spiritual understanding will be opened that he may comprehend the things of God.

4. The rash. Compare ch. 6:10. The "rash" are those who do not take time to think things through in order to reach sound conclusions. In the promised time of restoration such people will exercise sound judgment. Blessed with clear understanding and keen discernment, they will not be compelled to speak in broken words or with a faltering tongue.

5. *The vile person.* The verse reads literally, “The fool will no longer be called noble, nor the rogue said to be honorable.” Men will no longer mistake ignorance for wisdom or darkness for light. They will not “call evil good, and good evil” (ch. 5:20).

6. *Will speak villany.* Isaiah graphically portrays the actions of the “fool.” In the better day to come, men will be recognized for what they are, not for what they pretend to be. A sinner will be classified as such, and will receive a sinner’s certain reward.

8. *The liberal.* That is, the “noble,” or “generous,” person. He will not suffer for having been generous.

9. *Ye careless daughters.* Isaiah addresses the favored women in Jerusalem, who, because of their pampered lives, feel most keenly the hardships of a siege. Compare his denunciation of the haughty “daughters of Zion” in ch. 3:16–26.

10. *Many days and years.* Literally, “days upon a year.” In little more than a year, trouble would come upon the “careless daughters” of v. 9.

The vintage shall fail. A literal failure of the grape crop may be meant, and with it a shortage of wine for festive occasions. Or, this may be figurative for the loss of all forms of joy.

The gathering. That is, the gathering of fruit.

11. *Tremble, ye women.* They are called to mourn and repent, to put on sackcloth in place of their costly finery. Prayer and fasting are in order, not feasting and merrymaking.

12. *Lament for the teats.* By comparison with the Syriac, “beat upon the breasts,” an Oriental manner of expressing grief and distress. Prosperity would soon give way to desolation and distress.

The fruitful vine. See on v. 10.

13. *Thorns and briers.* A symbol of desolation (see on ch. 7:23–25).

Houses of joy. The stately villas where the wealthy gathered for their banquets and drunken revelries. The prediction of v. 13 was partially fulfilled at the time of Sennacherib’s invasion, more fully so when Nebuchadnezzar laid the country waste, and still later when the Romans devastated the land.

14. *Palaces.* The glorious achievements of man lie desolate and in ruins.

A joy of wild asses. For comment see on ch. 7:25.

15. *Spirit be poured.* These words were partially fulfilled in the great reformation sponsored by Hezekiah, but more completely so at the time of Pentecost (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17; see also Hosea 6:3; Joel 2:23; Zech. 10:1; Rev. 18:1).

Fruitful field. Primarily, at least, a figurative expression (Isa. 32:16; cf. Isa. 5:1–7; Gal. 5:22, 23). The time would come when there would be outpourings of God’s Spirit upon the world, which would cause regions spiritually barren and desolate to blossom as the rose. This is one of Isaiah’s favorite themes (Isa. 29:17; 35:1; 41:17–20; 55:13).

Counted for a forest. What was already a “fruitful field” would become even more productive.

16. *Judgment.* Justice would flourish in what had previously been a moral wilderness, and the righteousness of the already “fruitful field” would not be diminished in the least.

17. *Work of righteousness.* Righteousness is the result of living in harmony with the will of God. God is love, and all His commandments are “righteousness” (Ps. 119:172). Men who love God with all their heart and their neighbor as themselves are at peace with God and with the world about them. Lasting peace can prevail only where there is a solid

foundation of righteousness. Without justice there can be no peace (Isa. 48:22). Men who cling to sin will never find peace, no matter how earnestly they seek it. The greatest need of our troubled world is an understanding of this important, fundamental principle.

19. It shall hail. The Targums read, “the forest goes down utterly.” In contrast with the “peaceable habitation” of the righteous (v. 18), desolation will be the certain lot of the wicked (see Rev. 16:19; 18:2, 21).

20. Sow beside all waters. Those who labor faithfully now are promised a sure and abundant harvest.

The ox and the ass. The Jews employed both oxen and asses in their agricultural activities (Deut. 22:10; Isa. 30:24). These were the common domestic beasts of burden in the ancient Orient.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 AA 432; DA 103; MH 124; MYP 98; PP 413; 2T 48, 100; 8T 130

8 9T 253

17 AA 566; DA 337; GC 277; ML 176

18 CH 423; CT 343; GC 675

20 AA 345; CE 7, 53; CH 465; ChS 153; CM 4, 10, 113; COL 40, 85; CS 129; CW 141; CSW 55; Ed 109; Ev 63, 129; LS 208, 214; MYP 217; TM 425; 3T 406, 420; 4T 76; 5T 381, 389, 403; 6T 314; 7T 19, 36; 8T 146; 9T 35, 127, 132; WM 73, 266

CHAPTER 33

1 *God's judgments against the enemies of the church.* 13 *The privileges of the godly.*

1. Woe to thee. This chapter was doubtless inspired by the judgment that befell the hosts of Sennacherib (ch. 37:36). The invaders had ravaged Judah, but the Lord would deliver her from the might of her oppressors. The chapter alternates between strong consolation for the faithful and severe rebukes for the wicked. Isaiah's prophetic vision beholds also the glorious Messianic age (see on ch. 32:1).

Thou wast not spoiled. Assyria's wars of aggression against her neighbors had been extensive. She was interested primarily in loot, and sent her armies forth for purposes of plunder. But eventually Assyria would receive payment in kind (see Matt. 7:2; cf. Jer. 50:15, 29; 51:24; Rev. 13:10).

2. Waited for thee. See on ch. 25:8, 9.

Their arm. Many ancient Hebrew manuscripts, the Targums, and the Syriac read “our arm.” Isaiah here asks help for his own people—perhaps especially the defenders of the city. The next phrase, “our salvation,” clearly refers to those with him in Jerusalem.

3. Nations were scattered. This refers to the destruction of the hosts of Sennacherib (see ch. 37:36, 37). On that occasion a great “tumult” (ch. 37:29) struck terror to the hearts of the Assyrians.

4. Your spoil. This refers to the plundering of the Assyrian camp after the annihilation of the invaders and the precipitate flight of the few survivors. As caterpillars and locusts devour everything green, so the Hebrews would, in due time, strip the haughty Assyrians bare.

5. The Lord is exalted. The spectacular annihilation of the Assyrian hosts (ch. 37:36) brought honor and renown to the true God.

He hath filled Zion. The lesson of Sennacherib's invasion would, presumably, result in a revival throughout the city of Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah.

Judgment. Or, “justice,” that is, among men.

6. *The stability.* Judah would find its strength and stability, not in armed might, but in God and in loyalty to His revealed will (see Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7).

7. *The ambassadors of peace.* Hezekiah's envoys were given such hard terms (2 Kings 18:14–16) as to cause them to “weep bitterly.” When the Hebrew deputies met with the Rabshakeh sent to Jerusalem, they found his terms of surrender so harsh that they returned with “their clothes rent” (2 Kings 18:37).

8. *The highways lie waste.* The roads of Judah were no longer open for travel. The army of Sennacherib had reduced the country to such straits that men no longer dared travel by the highways.

Cities. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads ‘*edim*, “witnesses,” for ‘*irim*, “cities,” the only difference in the consonantal text being between the *d* and the *r* (see Vol. I, p. 26; see on Gen. 10:4).

9. *The earth mourneth.* The entire countryside of Judah was devastated during the course of Assyrian invasion. Other districts of Palestine shared the same sad fate.

10. *Now will I rise.* The hour of man's extremity is the hour of God's opportunity. When it seemed that the situation was hopeless, and that the last vestige of Judean resistance would soon be crushed out by the cruel conqueror, the Lord arose to deliver the remnant in Jerusalem.

11. *Conceive chaff.* This verse stresses the emptiness and vanity of Assyrian pretensions. For all their effort they would produce only chaff. Their bold schemes would turn to devour the very ones who had given them birth.

12. *Burnings of lime.* They would be utterly destroyed, as when limestone is reduced to lime, or when thorns are consumed in the fire.

13. *Acknowledge my might.* In bringing judgment upon Assyria, God taught men everywhere the futility of human wisdom and strength. He frequently permits a situation to reach a point of crisis, that when He intervenes, men may recognize His authority and power.

14. *The devouring fire.* God is as a consuming fire to the wicked (Heb. 12:29). Only “the pure in heart” shall “see God” (Matt. 5:8) and live. The questions here asked are similar to those of Ps. 15:1; 24:3. Isaiah gives his answer in the following verse.

15. *Walketh righteously.* Compare the answers given here with those of the psalmist in Ps. 15:2–5; 24:4. To be sure, righteousness is fundamentally a matter of the heart and the mind, but a man must also “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7). Right attitudes will be reflected in right words and deeds.

The gain of oppressions. Assyria had secured its wealth by oppressing weaker nations. But many in Jerusalem and Judah had amassed their fortunes in much the same manner (see on ch. 5:7).

Shaketh his hands. That is, in a gesture indicating refusal to participate in illicit rewards.

Stoppeth his ears. That is, refuses to participate in plots against the lives of innocent persons.

Shutteth his eyes. The Lord is of “purer eyes than to behold evil” (Hab. 1:13). Those who serve Him will not countenance evil in any form.

16. *He shall dwell on high.* That is, in a place of safety. Ancient cities were built “on high” for protection against invasion. High ground is always advantageous in warfare.

The munitions. Or, “strongholds.” To those who love and serve Him, the Lord offers protection and care during every time of trouble. The promise here given will prove of special comfort to God’s people during the great crisis of the last days, when places of safety will be provided for them out of reach of those bent on their destruction (see Ps. 61:2, 3; 91:1, 2). While the wicked suffer for lack of food and water (see Rev. 16:4–9; cf. GC 626, 628) the saints will have life’s necessities provided them.

17. The king. During the trials and tribulations of the last days the people of God find comfort in the thought that soon Christ will come. They will see Him in His glory (see on ch. 25:8, 9), and the land of promise that they had seen with the eye of faith, as it were “far off” (ch. 33:17), will then become a reality.

18. Shall meditate terror. Delivered from their enemies, God’s people reflect on the fearful scenes through which they have passed. The trials of the past seem as but a dream. This was true when Jerusalem had been delivered from Sennacherib’s hosts, and will again be true of the saints at Christ’s second coming.

The scribe ... the receiver. Where were the Assyrian scribes, fixing the amount of tribute to be exacted from each unfortunate victim? Where were the receivers of tribute and the masters of the siege? Now all were gone, and everything was at peace. Similarly, at Christ’s second coming, the faithful will rejoice in deliverance from the hands of those who have so recently sought to slay them.

19. A fierce people. The insolent Assyrian invaders, with their strange tongue and fierce ways, are to be no more. Instead of seeing the Assyrians they would “see the king in his beauty” (v. 17). Compare Ex. 14:13.

20. Look upon Zion. The hostile invaders have gone; every danger has disappeared. The Holy City is now at peace. Compare the description of Joel 3:16–20.

Our solemnities. Literally, “our appointed feasts” (see on Lev. 23:2).

21. Broad rivers and streams. A description of the fertility and beauty of the restored Land of Promise. Here are the “river” and “streams” that “make glad the city of God” (Ps. 46:4). Compare Ezekiel’s river (Eze. 47).

No galley. No enemy ships would sail their streams (see Eze. 47:1; Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8; Rev. 22:1).

23. Thy tacklings. The figure of v. 21 is continued. The enemy is like a ship whose tackle hangs loose, whose mast totters, and whose sail is useless—a derelict. The hour of victory for the saints is the hour of shame and defeat for their enemies. The “lame,” who usually have no part in military service, become the victors and spoil their enemies.

24. I am sick. There will be no sickness in the earth made new, either of the body or of the soul (see Jer. 31:34). The healing of disease and the forgiveness of sin are mentioned together again in Ps. 103:3; Matt. 9:2, 6. Christ is the healer of man’s physical and spiritual maladies.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5, 6 FE 353

6 Ed 229; PK 83

13–17CW 113

14 1T 123; 4T 528

14–16GC 626; PK 725; 2T 446

15–17Ed 141

16 DA 122; EW 56, 282; GC 629, 635; MB 111; SR 129, 406; 1T 174

17 CT 209; DA 632; Ev 503; EW 67; ML 347; PK 321; TM 21; 2T 355; 7T 12; 8T 253,
 331; 9T 193
 20–22Ed 182
 21, 22 PK 321
 23 MB 62
 24 Ed 271; GC 676; PK 729; 9T 286

CHAPTER 34

1 *The judgments wherewith God revengeth his church.* 11 *The desolation of her enemies.*
 16 *The certainty of the prophecy.*

1. Let the earth hear. The message of ch. 34 is not for Judah alone, but for all nations and for all time. Isaiah here describes the sad and terrible fate of the wicked, both in his own day and at the end of time. He beholds the great day of slaughter, when the wicked perish and their corpses are scattered about like those of Sennacherib's army after the visit of the destroying angel of the Lord (ch. 37:36). In the destruction of the Assyrian army he sees promise of the fate of all the hosts of evil that fight against God. Idumea, or Edom (v. 5), is selected as the typical representative of the enemies of right because Edom often proved to be the most cruel and heartless of the enemies of Judah (see 2 Chron. 28:17; Eze. 35; Amos 1:11; Obadia).

2. Indignation. See on ch. 26:20.

All their armies. As God's indignation was upon the Assyrian armies that attacked Jerusalem, so also would it be upon all forces of evil that array themselves against His people. Compare Joel 3:2; Zech. 12:2–9; 14:2, 3; Rev. 16:14, 16; 17:14; 19:11–19.

Utterly destroyed them. Heb. *charam*, "to devote to destruction," "to doom" (see on 1 Sam. 15:3).

3. Their stink. That is, of dead enemy warriors. When God destroyed the forces of Sennacherib the corpses of the slain were strewn over the ground like refuse (see Isa. 66:16; Jer. 25:33; Eze. 39:11–20; Rev. 19:17–21).

Shall be melted. Or, "shall become liquid," or "shall flow" (see Rev. 14:20).

4. The host of heaven. That is, the sun, moon, and stars (see 2 Kings 21:3; 23:5; Jer. 8:2; 33:22; etc.). Instead of "all the host of heaven shall be dissolved," Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads, "The depths shall be split open, and all the host of heaven shall wither away."

Dissolved. For comment on this expression see on Isa. 13:10, 13; 24:23; Heb. 1:10–14.

Rolled together. Reference is here made to the atmospheric heavens (see on 2 Peter 3:7, 10–12; Rev. 6:14; cf. Isa. 24:19, 20; Jer. 4:23, 28).

Fall down. See on Matt. 24:29; Rev. 6:13.

5. My sword. The sword of the Lord symbolizes His judgments upon the wicked. Compare Deut. 32:41, 42; Jer. 46:10; Rev. 19:13, 15, 21.

Idumea. Or, Edom (see on Eze. 35:15). Often all the enemies of God's people are typified by some one nation whose hatred and cruelty had been particularly bitter. Nations thus singled out were Egypt, Babylon, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. Closely related to the Jews, the Edomites always manifested a particular spite against them (see on Isa. 34:1). At the time of an Assyrian invasion Edom had possibly joined the Assyrian and had vented its wrath upon Judah, and thus the name of Edom is here associated with that of Assyria in Isaiah's pronouncements of doom. For divine judgments on Edom as symbolic of the great day of God, see on ch. 63:1–6.

6. A sacrifice in Bozrah. Bozrah was an important city of Edom (Isa. 63:1; cf. Gen. 36:33; 1 Chron. 1:44) 24 mi. (38.5 km.) south by east from the Dead Sea. Amos foretold the destruction of its palaces (Amos 1:12), and Jeremiah declared that it would become a desolation and a reproach (Jer 49:13, 22). The lambs, goats, and rams represent the people of Edom, who will be devoted to slaughter like animals at the time of sacrifice. Jeremiah uses a similar figure of speech (Jer. 46:10).

7. Unicorns. Heb. *re'emim*, “wild oxen” (see on Num. 23:22). The various oxen of this verse represent the strong nations of earth, which would accompany the weaker nations, the lambs, goats, and rams of v. 6, to the place of sacrifice.

8. The controversy. Literally, “the case,” in a legal sense. The nations are here represented as participants in the great contest between good and evil, arrayed with Satan against Zion, the city of God. Compare Zech. 3:1, 2. The seemingly long-delayed hour of retribution is pictured, wherein “Edom” (see on Isa. 34:5, 6) will be punished for its persistent hostility against God’s chosen people (see Isa. 63:1–4; cf. Jer. 46:10). For the application of this verse to the great day of God see GC 673.

9. Brimstone. The imagery of v. 9 is based on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (see on Gen. 19:24). The region occupied by these cities probably lay at the southern end of the Dead Sea (see on Gen. 14:3). Even today liquid petroleum and bitumen are found here. When Christ returns, the entire earth will be destroyed in a great conflagration (2 Peter 3:10, 12; Rev. 20:10, 14).

10. The smoke thereof. Compare similar expressions in Rev. 14:11 and 19:3. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is set forth as an example of “the vengeance of eternal fire,” which will destroy the wicked (Jude 7). Those cities, whose destruction was “an ensample” to the “ungodly,” were consumed “into ashes” (2 Peter 2:6). All the wicked are likewise to be utterly destroyed and consumed “into smoke” (Ps. 37:20). Proud Babylon, whose smoke “rose up for ever and ever” (Rev. 19:3), will be “utterly burned with fire” (Rev. 18:8). The fires of the last day will leave the wicked “neither root nor branch” (Mal. 4:1, 3; cf. Ps. 37:9, 10; Obadiah 10), and as if they had never been (see Eze. 28:18, 19; Obadiah 16).

11. The cormorant. Heb. *qa'ath*, an unidentified, unclean bird, possibly a species of owl or hawk. In Lev. 11:18 and Deut. 14:17 *qa'ath* is translated “pelican.”

Bittern. Heb. *qippod*, probably the “hedgehog,” or the “porcupine.” In Zeph. 2:14 the “cormorant” and “bittern” are again mentioned together.

Confusion ... emptiness. Heb. *tohu* ... *bohu*, the same terms translated “without form” and “void” in Gen. 1:2, and meaning “chaotic” and “empty” (see on Gen. 1:2). The same vivid picture is given of the earth as it will be during the millennium (see on Isa. 24:1, 3; Rev. 20:1–3). For the word here translated “line” see on Isa. 28:17.

12. They shall call. The meaning of the Hebrew of the first clause of v. 12 is uncertain. It reads literally, “Her nobles, and not there a kingdom they shall call.”

Shall be nothing. All the leaders of Edom have fled, and the kingdom is in a chaotic state.

13. Dragons. See on ch. 13:22.

Owls. See on ch. 13:21.

14. Satyr. See on ch. 13:21. Verses 11–15 present a highly figurative description of the world in its chaotic state.

The screech owl. Heb. *lilith*, a word meaning “wicked demon” in Akkadian.

15. The great owl. Heb. *qippoz*, perhaps a small serpent. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads *qippod*, either the “hedgehog” (see on v. 11) or possibly the short-eared owl.

16. The book of the Lord. Nowhere but in the Inspired Record is there reliable information about the conditions that prevail when “the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations” (see on v. 2).

Want. Literally, “miss,” “long for,” that is, “lack.”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 GC 672; SR 428

4 DA 780

8 GC 673; SR 429; 5T 212

CHAPTER 35

1 *The joyful flourishing of Christ’s kingdom.* 3 *The weak are encouraged by the virtues and privileges of the gospel.*

1. Desert shall rejoice. This chapter presents an inspired and inspiring picture of the earth in its restored state. The arid and waste regions of the world in its present state will be no more.

The rose. Heb. *chabaşseleth*, thought by some to have been the narcissus, a popular wildflower of Palestine. Others have identified it with the crocus or primrose. Verses 1, 2 portray the beauty and fragrance of a land that blooms again after being freed from the curse of sin.

2. Lebanon. The Lebanon Mts., Mt. Carmel, and the Plain of Sharon were noted for their verdure and beauty. In ch. 33:9 a curse had stripped these regions of their verdure and reduced them to a wilderness state. Now, however, they were to be restored by God to their Edenic beauty (see chs. 41:19; 55:12, 13; 65:10).

3. Confirm. Or, “make firm.” God’s messengers are to encourage their fellow men to look forward with confidence to the glories of the earth made new and to trust in His power to deliver them from this present world cursed by sin.

4. With vengeance. That is, upon His enemies, but to “save” His faithful people (see Matt. 25:32, 34, 41). The disposal of the enemies of God’s people prepares the way for their deliverance, and with the knowledge of this, His children may take courage and hope (see Isa. 25:9; John 14:1–3; Titus 2:13).

5. The eyes of the blind. This promise will be true both literally and figuratively. Men who are spiritually blind (ch. 6:9, 10) will have the eyes of their spiritual vision opened and the ears of their moral understanding unstopped. In the earth made new all physical infirmities will likewise be healed.

6. Waters break out. This will be true both literally and figuratively (see on v. 5). For the figurative application see Ps. 46:4; Zech. 13:1; John 4:10; John 7:37, and for the literal fulfillment see Eze. 47:1–12; Rev. 22:1, 2.

7. The parched ground. Fertility and beauty will characterize even the regions of earth that are now sterile and barren.

Dragons. See on ch. 13:22.

8. An highway. See on chs. 11:16; 19:23–25. Had the people of Israel been faithful to God, the Land of Promise would have been restored to its Edenic fertility and beauty, as here pictured in vs. 1–4, 7, and sickness and disease would have disappeared from among them, as portrayed in vs. 5, 6 (see pp. 27, 28). From all nations sincere seekers for truth would travel “The way of holiness” up to Jerusalem to learn of the true God (see pp. 28–30). “The way of holiness” would not be for “the unclean,” or insincere, yet it would be so clearly marked that even the simplest of men, if honest in their search for truth, would not lose their way. All “the ransomed of the Lord” would eventually “come to Zion” along this highway “with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads” (see on Isa. 35:10; cf. Isa. 52:1; Joel 3:17). But Israel proved unfaithful, and accordingly forfeited the glorious destiny that might have been hers, and the promises of this chapter belong to the church today (MH 159, 160; see pp. 35, 36).

And a way. Nineteen Hebrew manuscripts, including Dead Sea scroll 1QIs, together with the Syriac, do not have these words.

9. No lion. In ancient times lions were a serious menace to those who journeyed through wild and desolate regions. But God assured a safe journey to those who would travel to Jerusalem along His holy way.

10. The ransomed. That is, those of all nations who accepted salvation.

With songs. The journey to Zion is a happy one. Pilgrims on their way to attend the feasts at Jerusalem went with hearts full of joy and thanksgiving to God. They sang psalms of praise (see Ps. 121; Ps. 122) as they looked forward to the happy hours they would spend in the sacred city, in fellowship with one another and in communion with God. This was to be the experience of “the ransomed” of all nations.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–10MH 160; 8T 78

1 DA 305; GC 675; ML 139; 6T 24, 308

1, 2 PP 542

2 GC 302; PK 313, 733

3, 4 1T 370; 4T 131; 5T 489

3–6PK 728

5–10PP 542

6 PP 413; 5T 565

6, 7 PK 234

6–8PK 729

8 AA 53; Ed 170; FE 340; GC 320; 2T 692

10 Ed 167; ML 344; MYP 116; PK 730; SL 95

CHAPTER 36

1 *Sennacherib invadeth Judah.* 4 *Rabshakeh, sent by Sennacherib, by blasphemous persuasions soliciteth the people to revolt.* 22 *His words are told to Hezekiah.*

1. It came to pass. This chapter marks the beginning of a new section of the book of Isaiah. Chapters 36–39 are principally historical rather than prophetic in nature, dealing with Sennacherib’s invasions, Hezekiah’s illness, and the visit of Merodachbaladan’s envoys. These chapters are parallel to, and in large measure identical with, 2 Kings 18:13–20:19, to which, in general, reference should be made for comment.

The fourteenth year. See on 2 Kings 18:13. Sennacherib became king of Assyria in 705 B.C. and made his first campaign against the cities of Judah in 701. In his own

account of this campaign, in which he claims the capture of 46 walled cities of Judah, he lists among his reasons for making the expedition: (1) the fact that Hezekiah had refused to submit to the Assyrian yoke; (2) that he had called upon Egypt and Ethiopia for help; and (3) that he had assisted the Philistines of Ekron in their uprising against Assyria, and had imprisoned their king Padi, who had been loyal to Assyria.

2. *Sent Rabshakeh.* See on 2 Kings 18:17, 19. This was the title of the chief cupbearer of the Assyrian king. He was an important military official, associated with the tartan and the rabsaris, in command of the Assyrian forces sent against Jerusalem.

Lachish. See on 2 Kings 18:14.

Upper pool. See on 2 Kings 18:17.

3. *Eliakim.* See on 2 Kings 18:18.

4. *Wherein thou trustest.* See on 2 Kings 18:19.

5. *I say ... I have.* Instead of “I say,” about 20 ancient Hebrew manuscripts, the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs, and the parallel passage in 2 Kings 18:20 read, “Thou sayest.” The first part of the verse reads literally, “Thou sayest, surely the word of the lips, plan and strength for the war,” meaning, “Thou sayest, Surely [our] plans and strength [are adequate] for the war.”

Strength for war. See on 2 Kings 18:20. Hezekiah had been under tribute to Assyria, like his father Ahaz before him (2 Kings 16:7, 8). It was his refusal to pay tribute that brought the armies of Assyria against him.

6. *Broken reed.* See on 2 Kings 18:21.

7. *Hath taken away.* See on 2 Kings 18:22; cf. 2 Chron. 31:1.

8. *Two thousand horses.* See on 2 Kings 18:23. It is clear that Judah had no trained cavalry. The Assyrians derided Hezekiah for presuming to resist them when he was so woefully weak in this important area of military equipment.

9. *Put thy trust on Egypt.* See on 2 Kings 18:21, 24. Isaiah had previously upbraided the leaders of Judah for placing their trust in military equipment and in a treaty with Egypt (Isa. 30:1–4; 31:1), and warned them that their reliance on Egypt would be in vain (chs. 30:7; 31:3).

10. *The Lord said.* See on 2 Kings 18:25. In one of his inscriptions Sennacherib claims a divine sanction from his god Ashur to go against his enemies.

11. *Syrian language.* Aramaic (see on 2 Kings 18:26). It was the purpose of the Assyrian envoys to turn the inhabitants of Jerusalem against their king and to frighten them into submission.

12. *Sit upon the wall.* See on 2 Kings 18:27. Sennacherib’s envoys made it appear that they were more interested in the welfare of the inhabitants of Jerusalem than Hezekiah was. What did it matter to Sennacherib’s that in a prolonged siege the people would eat their own dung and drink their own urine? The only way to avoid such a fate, they said, was for the people to turn against their king.

13. *Jews’ language.* See on 2 Kings 18:28.

14. *Deceive you.* See on 2 Kings 18:29. The Rabshakeh was picturing Hezekiah as a vainglorious, self-interested deceiver who cared nothing about the welfare of his people.

15. *Neither let Hezekiah.* See on 2 Kings 18:30. Unless the Assyrians could turn the people away from God, they could not bring them within their power. The issue thus was distinctly drawn—loyalty to God or an alliance with the Assyrian king. Sennacherib’s challenge was in reality a defiance of God Himself.

16. Make an agreement. See on 2 Kings 18:31. The Rabshakeh made grandiose promises as to what the result of disloyalty to Hezekiah and allegiance to Sennacherib would bring.

17. Like your own. See on 2 Kings 18:32.

Had it been in Sennacherib's mind to give to the people of Judah the rewards he promised, he would have left them in their own land. His threat to take them away to a distant land proved his words a mockery and his promises vain.

18. Any of the gods. See on 2 Kings 18:33.

19. Of Hamath. See on 2 Kings 18:34. Samaria had fallen into Assyrian hands only 22 years before Sennacherib's present attack on Judah. The fact that the capital of the northern kingdom was unable to stand before Assyrian might was regarded as the crowning evidence that Jerusalem must likewise fall.

20. Among all the gods. See on 2 Kings 18:35.

21. Held their peace. See on 2 Kings 18:36. There was no effective answer that man could give to the arrogant Assyrian envoy. God alone could give the proper answer, and Hezekiah had faith to believe He would. Nothing that the Hebrew envoys might have said would have turned Sennacherib from his purpose, and they were therefore wisely commanded by Hezekiah to hold their peace.

22. With their clothes rent. See on 2 Kings 18:37.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

11, 13–20PK 353

21, 22 PK 354

CHAPTER 37

1 *Hezekiah mourning sendeth to Isaiah to pray for them.* 6 *Isaiah comforteth them.* 8 *Sennacherib, going to encounter Tirhakah, sendeth a blasphemous letter to Hezekiah.* 14 *Hezekiah's prayer.* 21 *Isaiah's prophecy of the pride and destruction of Sennacherib, and the good of Zion.* 36 *An angel slayeth the Assyrians.* 37 *Sennacherib is slain at Nineveh by his own sons.*

1. Rent his clothes. See on 2 Kings 19:1. Hezekiah's resort to "the house of the Lord" was in keeping with the counsel of Joel 1:8–14, given at another time of crisis.

2. Unto Isaiah. The king was in a dilemma from which none but a prophet of the true God could point a way of escape.

3. Day of trouble. See on 2 Kings 19:3. As God answered the earnest prayers of His people in the days of Isaiah, so He will always hear and deliver them (see Ps. 46:5–11; 91).

4. God will hear. See on 2 Kings 19:4. God is able to save "to the uttermost" all that come to Him, "seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

6. Be not afraid. See on 2 Kings 19:6.

7. I will send a blast. See on 2 Kings 19:7.

8. Libnah. See on 2 Kings 19:8.

9. Tirhakah. See on 2 Kings 19:9; see also Vol. II, pp. 53, 64. The approach of Tirhakah (Taharka) made it advisable for Sennacherib to renew his efforts to secure Hezekiah's immediate submission.

He sent messengers. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads, "he sent messengers again."

10. Deceive thee. See on 2 Kings 19:10. Having failed to take Jerusalem by arms, Sennacherib was making a desperate effort to take it by words. His message this time was much the same as the previous one (Isa. 36:15, 18–20), only more desperate and defiant.

11. To all lands. See on 2 Kings 19:11. The Assyrian kings were heartless and cruel, and proud of their cruelty. By the sheer horror of their bloody deeds they hoped to strike terror into the hearts of men and nations, and thus bring the world under their control.

12. Gozan, and Haran. See on 2 Kings 19:12.

13. Of Hamath. See on 2 Kings 19:13. The same question had already been asked regarding the gods of Hamath and Arpad (Isa. 36:19), and now, of the kings of these cities. The implied answer is that they had met with the terrible fate of all who dared to resist Assyrian arms. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs adds Samaria after Ivah.

14. Received the letter. See on 2 Kings 19:14.

16. Between the cherubims. See on 2 Kings 19:15.

17. To reproach. See on 2 Kings 19:16. Hezekiah regarded the words of Sennacherib as addressed not so much to himself as to God. Hezekiah ruled as the representative of God on earth.

18. Laid waste all the nations. Assyria was now at the very height of its power. Tiglath-pileser III (745–727), Shalmaneser V (727–722), Sargon II (722–705), and Sennacherib (705–681) were the greatest kings that Assyria ever knew, and under their sway the nations of Western Asia were crushed and left desolate. If Sennacherib boasted, Hezekiah now frankly acknowledged that his boasting was not without reason. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs omits “and their countries.”

19. No gods. See on 2 Kings 19:18.

20. All the kingdoms. See on 2 Kings 19:19.

21. Thus saith the Lord. It appears that Isaiah was not present when Hezekiah offered his earnest prayer, but that the Lord informed His prophet of the prayer, and of the favorable answer that would be given. At this time of national crisis God would not leave His people without hope. See on 2 Kings 19:20.

22. The virgin. Like a virgin, Zion had been threatened by Sennacherib, who was determined to humiliate her before the world. But Zion courageously refused to submit to the Assyrian, and God would reward her for her fidelity to Him. See on 2 Kings 19:21.

23. The Holy One. See on 2 Kings 19:22. It was to Him that Zion was betrothed, and in reproaching her the Assyrian was reproaching God. For the honor of His own holy name God would come to the defense of Zion.

24. Hast said. See on 2 Kings 19:23. Man was setting himself and his puny strength against the might of an omnipotent God. Sennacherib, like Lucifer, was guilty of self-glorification. His emphasis was on himself—“my chariots,” “am I come,” “I will cut down,” and “I will enter” (cf. Isa. 14:13, 14). The inscriptions of Sennacherib are replete with boasts such as this. But once more it was to be demonstrated that “pride goeth before destruction” (Prov. 16:18), and that “God resisteth the proud” (James 4:6).

25. Digged, and drunk. Sennacherib continues boasting of his power and his invincibility. Nothing can stop him. For him the difficulties that checkmate ordinary mortals are as nothing. See on 2 Kings 19:24.

Water. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “strange waters,” as in the parallel passage in 2 Kings 19:24.

26. *I have done it.* See on 2 Kings 19:25. Had God not withdrawn His protecting care from men and nations, the arms of Assyria would have been powerless against them.

27. *Of small power.* See on 2 Kings 19:26.

28. *I know thy abode.* Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads, “I know your rising up and your sitting down” (see Lam. 3:63). God warns Sennacherib that He is perfectly informed concerning all his activities and his intentions. The phrases “going out” and “coming in” include every activity of life (see Ps. 121:8; 139:2, 3).

29. *Hook in thy nose.* See on 2 Kings 19:28. The Assyrians frequently resorted to the utmost barbarity in their treatment of their victims. Sennacherib will be treated as he has treated others. The same figure is used of the treatment that will ultimately be meted out to all workers of iniquity (Isa. 30:28; Eze. 38:4).

30. *A sign.* See on 2 Kings 19:29. Hezekiah and the people of Judah are assured that God will give them a sign, as He often did (Isa. 7:11, 14; 38:8), in pledge of the fulfillment of the accompanying prediction. The Assyrian invasion had put a stop to all normal agricultural activities, but the people are assured of an adequate supply of food. The following year may have been a sabbatical year, during which enough food would grow of itself. The third year, however, would bring a resumption of normal life and activities. The fulfillment of this prediction within the specified time would be a token of the certain fulfillment of the wider promise in vs. 31, 32.

31. *The remnant.* See on 2 Kings 19:30.

32. *The zeal of the Lord.* See on 2 Kings 19:31. Only divine intervention would save Judah. Without God there was no hope. Israel had already been destroyed, and it now seemed that nothing could prevent Judah from suffering a similar fate.

33. *Cast a bank.* See on 2 Kings 19:32. The soldiers of Sennacherib were already encamped about the city, but would not proceed with the usual operations of a siege. No embankment would be thrown against the walls to allow the advance of siege engines and bowmen, and none of the enemy would succeed in entering the city. It appeared that Jerusalem was on the verge of a desperate siege, but that siege would not materialize.

35. *Mine own sake.* In coming to the defense of Jerusalem, God was defending His own majesty and honor against the blasphemy of Sennacherib (see on v. 24).

36. *The angel of the Lord.* See on 2 Kings 19:35. Angels are more commonly sent to save than to destroy. Nothing is known of the method employed by the angel upon this occasion, but whatever the method the visitation was sudden, and obliterated the besieging force. In accord with the ancient reluctance to enter unfavorable information in the national chronicles, the Assyrian records make no mention of this catastrophe. Various legendary explanations are without value.

37. *Sennacherib.* It is significant that Sennacherib was spared. He seems to have been with the portion of his army that was sent against Taharka (v. 9; see 2 Kings 19:9, and map, Vol. II, p. 954). Perhaps the Lord intended him to return to his homeland in shame and disgrace, as an object lesson of what happens to a man who sets himself against God. See on 2 Kings 19:36.

38. *His sons smote him.* See on 2 Kings 19:37. Although Sennacherib was permitted to return to Assyria, he did not escape a violent death. Assyrian and Babylonian records confirm the Biblical account of his assassination at the hands of his sons. It was in 681 that Sennacherib was slain and Esarhaddon began to reign. How long this was after his return is not known (see Vol. II, pp. 64, 65).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

16 PP 62
23 GC 287
38 PK 361

CHAPTER 38

1 *Hezekiah, having received a message of death, by prayer hath his life lengthened.* 8 *The sun goeth ten degrees backward, for a sign of that promise.* 9 *His song of thanksgiving.*

1. ***In those days.*** For comment see on 2 Kings 20:1.

2. ***Prayed.*** See on 2 Kings 20:2.

3. ***With a perfect heart.*** See on 2 Kings 20:3. At this time of crisis Hezekiah may have felt that the nation needed his services and that it was entirely right for him to plead his honorable record as a reason why he should be allowed to live.

5. ***Thus saith the Lord.*** See on 2 Kings 20:4, 5. Hezekiah's tears touched the heart of God, and God intervened.

6. ***I will deliver thee.*** Deliverance was to be twofold, from death and from the hands of Sennacherib. Satan was determined to bring about both the death of Hezekiah and the fall of Jerusalem, reasoning no doubt that if Hezekiah were out of the way, his efforts at reform would cease and the fall of Jerusalem could be the more readily accomplished. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs adds to the verse, "for my sake and for the sake of my servant David" (see 2 Kings 20:6).

7. ***A sign.*** See on 2 Kings 20:8. Regardless of appearances, Hezekiah would be healed. The sign preceding the healing was given to strengthen his own faith and that of his people (see on ch. 37:30).

8. ***I will bring again.*** According to 2 Kings 20:9, 10, Hezekiah was given the choice of whether the shadow of the sundial should go backward or forward. He chose the more difficult alternative. Here the record is abbreviated (see on 2 Kings 20:10, 11).

9. ***The writing of Hezekiah.*** This psalm of Hezekiah (vs. 9–20) is not found in the parallel record of 2 Kings. Verses 21, 22 seem to have originally followed v. 8, but in drawing up the record in its present form Hezekiah's poem was inserted within the narrative rather than added to it. This verse (v. 9) forms the superscription to the psalm, and is similar to a number of the headings found in the book of Psalms. Like many of the psalms, the poem is a record of an individual's experience, yet written in a form suitable for use in the Temple worship. The theme of the poem is the experience of a man face to face with death praying earnestly for life, and having his prayer heard. Perhaps to make the poem suitable for liturgical use, items of a more personal nature are not mentioned.

10. ***In the cutting off.*** Literally, "in the midst." At this time Hezekiah was probably about 40 years old (see on 2 Kings 18:2, 13).

11. ***Not see the Lord.*** Death would not bring him into the presence of God, but cut off communication with Him, as it would cut him off from contact with man (see Job 14:21; 17:13; Ps. 6:5; 115:17; 146:4; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Isa. 38:18).

12. ***Mine age.*** Perhaps, "my habitation," or "my dwelling," a nomad's "tent," which can readily be moved from place to place. According to the figure Hezekiah's abode would be removed from the land of the living to that of the dead (see 2 Cor. 5:1–3; cf. Phil. 1:23).

Cut off. Literally, "rolled up." Hezekiah has been weaving the web of life, but the pattern is now to be changed, and he must roll up the web before the pattern has been

completed, and cut it from the loom. In this figure Hezekiah expresses his disappointment and frustration at the prospect of prematurely terminating what seems to him a half-completed task.

13. *I reckoned.* Literally, “I composed myself,” “I quieted myself.” Compare Ps. 131:2, where the same Hebrew expression is translated “I . . . quieted myself.” Finding himself within the relentless grasp of an enemy—disease—before which he is powerless, Hezekiah faces the prospect of reconciling himself to what appears to be the inevitable. The entire verse is missing in the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs, but is found in 1QIs.

14. *Like a crane.* Hezekiah compares his cries in suffering to the plaintive calls of the birds here mentioned. At times he would groan aloud; again, only inwardly and inaudibly. He scarcely has strength to lift up his eyes to God and cry for deliverance from the terror that stands over him like an executioner with his weapon raised.

Undertake for me. Literally, “go surety for me,” or “stand up for me.” The figure is that of a debtor who finds himself in the hands of an exacting creditor. Death presses Hezekiah for immediate payment, and he appeals to God to rescue him.

15. *Himself hath done it.* The meaning of v. 15 is not entirely clear. Some have suggested that it deals with the sick man’s surprise at his sudden recovery, that words fail him with which to express gratitude to God. Others think he finds himself speechless, in consternation at having been smitten, as it seems, by God. If the Lord, whom he considered his Friend, has permitted him to come to the gates of death—what can he say? There is nothing left for him to do but to grieve and bemoan his fate, to pass his days in bitterness of soul.

16. *By these things men live.* Man lives by the words of God (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4), whether it be the life of the body or of the soul. When Hezekiah found physical life and healing, he also found spiritual restoration. In restoring the king’s body to health the Lord granted far more than he had asked (see Isa. 38:17; Matt. 9:2–7).

17. *For peace.* That is, “peace” in the broad meaning, “all that is good for me,” or “what is for my welfare.” The affliction that brought Hezekiah so much anguish was not for his hurt but for his benefit. God looked upon him in tender compassion and lifted him out of the pit of corruption. It was the power of divine love that saved him from the power of death.

All my sins. The healing of the body was tangible assurance of the healing of his soul. Divine forgiveness is not simply a legal transaction that releases a man from paying the penalty for past offenses; it is a transforming power that restores and strengthens the spiritual man’s nature and shapes him anew in the moral image of his Creator.

18. *The grave.* Death brings the complete cessation of all thought and activity (see on Ps. 115:17; 146:4; Eccl. 9:5). What particularly distressed Hezekiah was the thought that in death he could not give thanks or praise to God (Ps. 6:5; 30:9; 88:10, 11; 115:17).

19. *Make known thy truth.* Thankfulness inspired Hezekiah to tell others of the faithfulness and goodness of God.

20. *Save me.* The fact of God’s readiness to save Hezekiah bore him up in a transport of joy, expressed in this psalm (see on v. 9).

We will sing. The remainder of v. 20 is in the form of a postscript stating the king’s purpose in composing the psalm and his intention as to the use to be made of it.

21. *A lump of figs.* That is, a fig poultice (see on 2 Kings 20:7). The Lord might have healed Hezekiah without the use of this poultice, but where natural remedies exist God

intends that they should be used in the healing of disease. To use them does not show a lack of faith; on the contrary, a refusal to do so is presumption and reveals a lack of sound judgment.

22. *The sign.* See on 2 Kings 20:8. Through Isaiah the Lord had already told Hezekiah that he would be healed and that on the third day he would be able to go to the house of the Lord (2 Kings 20:5). For comment concerning the nature of this sign see on Isa. 38:7, 8.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 340; 5T 336
10–20PK 343
18, 19 GC 546
21 MH 232

CHAPTER 39

1 *Merodach-baladan, sending to visit Hezekiah because of the wonder, hath notice of his treasures. 3 Isaiah, understanding thereof, foretelleth the Babylonian captivity.*

1. *Merodach-baladan.* See on 2 Kings 20:12; see also Vol. II, p. 87. This name is common in the Assyrian inscriptions of Sargon and Sennacherib. Merodach-baladan, originally ruler of Bit—Yakin, a small state north of the Persian Gulf, was king of Babylon from 721 to 709, and again for a short time in 703. At the time of Hezekiah's illness and the sending of these envoys he was a king in exile. Because of his stalwart resistance against Sennacherib, Merodach-baladan saw in Hezekiah a valuable ally. The envoys ostensibly came to congratulate Hezekiah upon his recovery, but perhaps to secure his assistance in the bitter struggle then going on against Assyria's attempts to dominate the entire Near East.

2. *Hezekiah was glad.* His vanity had been flattered by this unexpected attention from a king of Babylon, and he was happy that others were interested in resisting Assyria. Hezekiah therefore welcomed the Babylonian envoys as allies and friends, little dreaming that in a short time Babylon would take the place of Assyria as the great power of the East and that one of its kings would conquer Judah.

Shewed them the house. For comment on Hezekiah's folly in doing this, see on 2 Kings 20:13.

3. *Then came Isaiah.* Compare previous messages by Isaiah against foreign alliances (chs. 8:9–13; 30:1–7; 31:1–5).

4. *What have they seen?* See on 2 Kings 20:15. Solomon had foreseen the time when men would come from distant lands to learn of Israel's God (1 Kings 8:41–43; see also pp. 28, 29). Failure to make use of this opportunity to bear witness to the true God proved Hezekiah ungrateful for the blessing of restored health (Isa. 38:1, 9).

6. *Carried to Babylon.* See on 2 Kings 20:17.

7. *Thy sons.* See on 2 Kings 20:18.

8. *Good is the word.* This attitude reflects a selfish point of view on the part of the king (see on 2 Kings 20:19).

Peace and truth. See on 2 Kings 20:19. Hezekiah took comfort in the thought that God would show him the favor of delaying punishment. God often postponed the execution of a sentence when men repented and showed themselves submissive to Him (see 1 Kings 21:28, 29; 2 Kings 22:18–20).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 344
2 PK 345
3, 4 PK 346
5–8PK 347

CHAPTER 40

1 *The promulgation of the gospel.* 3 *The preaching of John Baptist.* 9 *The preaching of the apostles.* 12 *The prophet by the omnipotency of God,* 18 *and his incomparableness,* 26 *comforteth the people.*

1. *Comfort ye my people.* This chapter begins the third and last section of the book of Isaiah. For consideration of the so-called Deutero-Isaiah problem, see pp. 84–86. In many ways chs. 40–66 constitute the most important part of Isaiah’s prophecy. Chapters 1–35 consist largely of a series of denunciations against transgression and pronouncements of judgments to follow. In chs. 36–39 there is a recital of incidents connected with Sennacherib’s invasion, Hezekiah’s illness and recovery, and the visit of the Babylonian envoys. In the chapters that follow, the message of the prophet is entirely different in tone and theme. Pronouncements of judgment and doom are largely in the past, and the remainder of the book deals with promises of the outpouring of God’s grace upon the righteous. It is largely chs. 40–66 that have earned for Isaiah the name of “gospel prophet.” Here, in the most sublime language ever to grace the lips of an inspired orator, Isaiah sets forth the glorious future of Israel as God’s faithful “servant,” her deliverance from every foe, the coming of Messiah, and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom.

The prophet’s mind goes forward to a time when God will be gracious to His people and will grant them the blessings of righteousness and peace.

There are many predictions regarding the coming Messiah, His character and offices, His life, and His self-sacrificing service and death. There are views of the enlargement of the church and of the ingathering of the Gentiles. Also, there are thrilling pictures of the earth restored to Edenic peace and beauty. Throughout this section Israel (that is, the people of Judah, as the northern kingdom no longer existed) appears as the chosen people of God, His “servant,” His “elect,” in whom He “delighteth” (ch. 42:1; etc.).

Danger from Assyria, the chief enemy of Judah in chs. 1–39, was now, for the most part at least, in the past, and through the prophet Isaiah God prepares His people for an even greater calamity—the Babylonian captivity a century later. In the new section beginning with ch. 40 God finds Israel discouraged because of the seeming failure of His purpose for them as a nation, and bids them look forward in faith to the glorious prospect that awaited them upon their return from captivity (see pp. 31, 32).

In the earlier part of the book, Isaiah proclaims a message of rebuke; now he sets before them one of comfort and hope. The previous section deals largely with the unrighteousness of the people; this, with the righteousness of God. Chapters 1–39 are concerned largely with the success of the enemy in drawing God’s people away from their high ideals; chs. 40–66, with the Lord’s success in drawing Israel back to its ideal position as the light and hope of the world. Here is a striking picture of Messiah as God’s Servant, and of men walking in His footsteps and being His witnesses. Here are sublime pictures of God as the hope of His people, and of His people returning to Him and occupying their appointed position as His representatives on earth. Here, they are delivered from the power of Babylon, they reoccupy the Land of Promise, and the waste places of earth become “like the garden of the Lord” (ch. 51:3).

2. *Speak ye comfortably.* The book of Isaiah opens with a message of stinging rebuke to Jerusalem (ch. 1:2–10). She was then “a besieged city,” and a wicked city like Sodom and Gomorrah (ch. 1:8–10). But now Isaiah foresees a time when “her warfare” is over and God sends a message of consolation to her. Punishment has been meted out because of her sins, and now pardon and restoration are offered.

Her warfare. The warfare referred to includes the military invasions of Isaiah’s own time, the conquests of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar more than a century later, and, figuratively, the broader warfare of the church against the powers of darkness in all ages. Looking forward with prophetic vision to the time of restoration at the close of the Babylonian captivity, Isaiah speaks with confidence, as if the foes of Israel had already been vanquished (see Vol. I, p. 27).

3. *Prepare ye.* It was God’s purpose that, upon restoration from Babylonian captivity, Israel as a nation should bend every effort to its own preparation and that of the nations about for the coming of Messiah. A glorious future awaited the nation, as the divine program was to proceed apace and without interruption until Messiah should appear and His eternal kingdom be set up (see pp. 29, 30). The process of preparation was to reach its climax in the life and ministry of John the Baptist, to whose work these words specifically pointed forward (see on Matt. 3:3). Likewise it is the privilege of the church today to “prepare ... the way of the Lord,” that He may return to earth in power and glory. As with Israel of old, this work of preparation is twofold, and consists first of a transformation of character, and second, of the proclamation of the gospel message to all mankind. Compare Isa. 62:10–12; Mal. 3:2.

A highway. For the symbolism here used see on Matt. 3:3.

4. *Every valley.* Preparations for the coming of an earthly monarch involved the repair of the way over which he was to travel, that his progress might be unhindered. As applied to the coming of King Messiah, the words have a spiritual application (see on Matt. 3:3). It was the work of John the Baptist to call upon men to prepare their own hearts and lives for the coming of Jesus (Matt. 3:5–12; Luke 3:3–17). God’s messengers in the last days are to proclaim a similar message.

5. *The glory of the Lord.* As revealed in the life and ministry of our Lord (John 1:14; 2:11; 2 Peter 1:16; see on Luke 2:52). At Christ’s second coming, men will behold His visible glory (Matt. 16:27; 25:31; Rev. 1:7).

6. *What shall I cry?* The Lord’s messenger found himself in perplexity. What message could he give appropriate to a time when the nation was suffering because of its sins? What message was there for “Sodom” and “Gomorrah” (ch. 1:9, 10) in the day of doom?

All flesh is grass. Compare Job 14:2; Ps. 90:5; 102:11; 103:15; James 1:10; 1 Peter 1:24.

7. *The Lord bloweth.* Like a withering blast the breath of God’s displeasure brings to nought the counsels of evil men. That which is unholy cannot abide in His presence. God sends forth His Spirit in order that men who are unclean and unholy may be transformed and renewed in the image of their Creator, but if they resist, they will perish like a flower of the field.

8. *The grass withereth.* Man is not immortal. So far as the element of life is concerned he is not superior to the grass of the field (see Eccl. 3:9–21).

The word of our God. The revealed will of God constitutes the spiritual food on which man is to subsist (Matt. 4:4; John 6:48–63). Truth never changes, for its Author is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). Those who come to Him for the sustenance of their souls will never “hunger” (John 6:35), nor will they “thirst” (John 4:14).

9. Zion. See on Ps. 48:2. Her “good tidings” are the message of God’s goodness and forgiveness. In a time of peril and darkness Zion has a message of hope and light. For a discussion of Israel as the messenger ordained to carry these tidings to the world see pp. 26–30.

Behold your God! Again and again in this section of the book, Isaiah points to evidences of the infinite power of God, by way of encouraging the disconsolate people of Judah to believe that the glorious promises might yet be theirs (see chs. 40:4, 5, 8, 10, 15, 17, 18, 26–29; 41:20; 42:13, 14; 43:13–19; 44:6; etc.). The great mistake of the professed people of God was that they took their eyes away from their Lord and Maker, and looked to themselves instead. Their great need was a vision of God and of His mercy and justice. Isaiah was given such a vision at the time of his call to prophetic office (ch. 6:1, 3). Having seen God himself, he was henceforth to help the people to see Him also, for only thus could they have life and hope. The grandest work ever entrusted to mortals is that of calling lost men and women to behold their Redeemer.

10. God will come. Isaiah here pictures the coming of the Lord in judgment (Isa. 25:9; 62:11, 12; Rev. 22:12). The arm of God is extended in mercy to the righteous and in judgment to the wicked (Isa. 51:5; 52:10; 63:5; cf. Matt. 25:33, 34, 46).

Work. Also, “wages,” that is, the reward to be paid for work performed (see chs. 49:4; 62:11).

11. Like a shepherd. The solicitous care of Christ for His people, providing for them and protecting them from harm, is often compared to the work of a gentle and faithful shepherd in caring for his flock (see Ps. 23:1; 77:20; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; Jer. 13:17; 31:10; Eze. 34:11–16; 37:24; Matt. 9:36; 18:12; Luke 15:4; John 10:11; Peter 2:25). As a shepherd gathers his lambs, carrying those that are too feeble to walk, and leading the ewes gently (see Gen. 33:13), so Christ exercises every possible care for His flock. God is not an unfeeling master or a cruel tyrant, but the very embodiment of consideration and love.

12. Who hath measured. The exalted picture Isaiah here gives of the wisdom, power, and eternal majesty of God is unsurpassed in Scripture (see Job 38:4–37). Again, in Isa. 40:26–28; 41:19, 20, the prophet refers to the power of God as manifested in the works of creation. Compare Ps. 96:5. See on Isa. 41:21. God is the great Master Worker of the universe, the One who fashioned the heavens and the earth. For Him no task is too great and no responsibility too small. Things infinitely large and incomprehensible to man are as nothing to Him. It is our privilege to trust in a God that is great and wise and good. All His wisdom and power are at the command of those who believe and trust in Him. Compare Isa. 57:15; see DA 827.

13. Who hath directed. Confronted with a difficult task, a man usually looks to those of experience for wisdom and direction. God neither asks nor needs help from anyone. There is none wiser or more able than He. Paul refers to this passage of Isaiah in Rom. 11:33, 34, in his mention of the infinite wisdom and knowledge of God (see 1 Cor. 2:16).

14. The way of understanding. The series of questions here asked has to do with knowledge, and understanding, and wisdom, a recurring theme of the book of Proverbs. God is the embodiment and personification of wisdom, and all knowledge and understanding come from Him (see on Prov. 1:7).

15. The nations. In the days of Isaiah, Assyria was the greatest nation of the earth, feared by all others. But the Lord would have His people know that this greatest nation was as nothing before Him. When men fear God they need have no fear of the so-called great powers of the earth. Regardless of the plans and purposes of men, God brings His own will to pass (see Isa. 14:24–27; see on Dan. 4:17).

16. Lebanon is not sufficient. Compare Ps. 50:10–12. The Hebrews made much of sacrifices in their religion, but if all the wood of the great forests of Lebanon were used as fuel for a mighty sacrifice composed of all the beasts that lived there, the oblation would not be commensurate with the majesty of God.

18. To whom then. See on v. 9. A comprehension of the greatness and the infinity of God reveals the utter folly of idolatry. Many of the Hebrews were following the heathen in their worship of idols, and Isaiah sought to turn them back to the worship and service of the true God.

19. The workman. Idols must be made by the hands of men, but the men who make the idols are themselves the handiwork of God. In the days of Isaiah, men employed their greatest ingenuity and their most precious metals in the manufacture of idols, but even then these were only the products of men's hands. What virtue could there be in setting up as objects of worship these things that are themselves made by man? Isaiah summons men to worship the true God because He created them. What folly for men to worship, instead, the things they themselves have made! As well might the Creator worship His creatures!

20. A tree. The poor man, who cannot afford to make his idol of precious metal, makes it of wood. But having made this idol, what does he have more than wood? How long will such a god endure?—till the wood rots away. Isaiah sets before his people the folly of worshiping gods made with human hands.

21. Have ye not known? Are you completely lacking in knowledge? Does common sense not make clear to you the folly of your course? Isaiah here appeals to the basic intuitions of men, to say nothing of divine command or revelation. Even without the benefit of revelation men have sense enough, if they use it, to realize that idols made by the hands of men are not suitable objects of worship (see Rom. 1:18–23).

22. The circle. Heb. *chug*, either the great vault of heaven or possibly the horizon, as also in Job 22:14. In Prov. 8:27 the same Hebrew word, translated “compass,” refers to the horizon. Above the great universe He has made, the Lord of heaven reigns supreme over all. Some have found in this verse evidence that Isaiah knew, presumably by revelation, that the earth is spherical in shape. He may, indeed, have known this fact; however, the Heb. *chug* seems to indicate a circle rather than a sphere, and evidence that he knew of the earth's sphericity must come from other sources. The picture here seems to be that of God enthroned above the vast vault of heaven. Even the greatest of men are utterly insignificant in comparison with Him. In the “heaven of heavens” (1 Kings 8:27) God dwells, as it were, in a curtained tent (see Ps. 104:2; cf. Isa. 66:1).

23. The princes. God removes kings and brings nations to their end. The rulers of earth occupy their thrones only so long as He permits (see Ps. 75:7; Jer. 27:5; Dan. 2:21;

4:17, 25; Acts 17:26; Rom. 13:1; see Additional Note on Dan. 4). Why fear the kings of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, or any other power so long as God is God?

24. *They shall not be planted.* The supposedly great men of earth are hardly better than the grass that withers or the flower that fades (v. 8). They vanish away when the Lord, as it were, blows upon them (v. 7).

25. *Saith the Holy One.* The characteristic attribute of God is not so much His great wisdom or power, as His perfect holiness. This is the secret of His wisdom and power. Righteousness is the foundation of His throne. In sharp contrast, the deities of the heathen—Baal, Molech, Ishtar, etc.—are vile creatures, the vices and passions of men deified.

26. *Lift up your eyes.* If men will but lift their vision heavenward, it is their privilege to behold undeniable evidence of the Creator and Sustainer of all things (see Ps. 19:1–3; Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:19–23). He sits, as it were, above all the starry host of heaven, governing the universe He has created. As we contemplate the number of the stars, their orderly arrangement, their glory and beauty, we cannot but be impressed with our own insignificance and the transcendent power of God. All the heavenly bodies pursue their assigned paths; each has its name and place, and each has its role in the great procession of space.

Failleth. That is, “is lacking,” or “is missing.”

27. *My way is hid.* Many in Judah felt that God had forgotten them and that He was not treating them justly. But there were many things they themselves failed to understand. Seated on His throne in the heavens, God sees all, knows all, and takes everything into consideration. He weighs carefully every factor, the past as well as the present, the future as well as the past. There is nothing that He fails to consider, no detail that escapes His notice. Whatever He does is wise, right, just, and good. Who is man to feel that he is being neglected or treated unjustly by God?

28. *Hast thou not known?* See on v. 21.

The everlasting God. How old are the oldest and wisest of men compared with the eternal God? Our world has been in existence for but a moment, in comparison with eternity. The wisest of the wise among men are at best the incarnation of weakness and folly, as compared with the Eternal One. No man can fathom the depths of God’s providence and wisdom (Ps. 145:3; Rom. 11:33). He who “tellethe the number of the stars,” and whose “understanding is infinite,” is good and kind enough to supply all the needs of men (Ps. 147:3–5; see Acts 14:17).

29. *He giveth power.* The God who faints not imparts strength to fainting hearts. Whatever man’s needs may be, God is able to supply them all (see Ps. 104:27; 145:15). Those who in meekness and lowliness of spirit realize their own frailties and shortcomings are the most certain of having their needs supplied (Isa. 57:15; Matt. 5:3–6). God’s ear is always attuned to the cry of those who feel themselves insufficient for the tasks at hand and who desire the help of Heaven. It is in the weakness of humanity that God’s strength is made perfect (2 Cor. 12:9). This fact has been proved in the lives of countless thousands.

30. *Young men.* Young men at the height of their vigor become weary and exhausted; even youths in the prime of life reach a point beyond which their strength fails. Many a struggle is lost because of weakness of body or spirit, even on the part of the most virile.

31. Wait upon the Lord. That is, look to the Lord in sincerity and humility for wisdom and strength, and then patiently await His guidance (see on ch. 30:21; cf. 57:15).

Renew their strength. The Christian life is a constant process of receiving from God and giving to God. Strength is expended in service for the Master (cf. Mark 5:30), but there are always new supplies of grace and vitality available from Him who knows not weariness. He who does not continue to receive strength from God will soon find himself in a position where he is unable to serve God. See DA 827.

As eagles. One of the most magnificent sights of the wild is an eagle soaring in the sky, higher and higher, with seemingly little effort. Similarly, the child of God who draws his strength from above is enabled to go ever onward and upward, always reaching new heights of achievement (see Ps. 103:5). Day after day it is the privilege of the Christian to go on from grace to grace and from victory to victory (see 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14; Ed 18; DA 679). Strength is added to strength, and progress is constant. Higher and still higher goals come into view, and eventually the Christian attains to “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 DA 826; PK 722
- 1–5 DA 135
- 2 PK 729
- 3 ChS 169; CS 190; Ev 88, 579; MM 330; 9T 96, 114
- 3, 4 DA 215
- 3–88T 9
- 4 FE 251; 8T 10
- 5 DA 103; GC 301; PK 689, 733; 6T 19
- 7, 8 Ed 183
- 8 COL 350; GC 288; MB 148; PK 187; PP 754
- 9 CW 93; PK 315, 696
- 9, 10 COL 415
- 9–11DA 476, 826; 6T 20
- 9–17TM 478
- 10 Ev 332; 2T 160, 520
- 10, 11 PK 697; 8T 10, 39
- 11 GW 211; MH 162; PP 191; WM 24
- 12 Ed 35; ML 336; PP 302; 4T 261
- 12–28 MH 431
- 12–318T 261
- 15 1T 536
- 15–17PK 185; 3T 194
- 18–29DA 282
- 22 1T 536
- 25, 26 GC 437; PK 3 6
- 25–31 8T 39
- 26 CT 456; PP 115; SC 86
- 26–29Ed 115
- 27 TM 447
- 27–31PK 316

28 FE 276; PK 164
28–31TM 479
29 COL 157; MH 268; 7T 69, 87, 244
29–31MYP 142
30, 31 COL 147
31 ML 277; 7T 243; 8T 11
7

CHAPTER 41

1 *God expostulateth with his people, about his mercies to the church, 10 about his promises, 21 and about the vanity of idols.*

1. Keep silence. The peoples of distant lands are bidden to listen in silence to the voice of God as He speaks to them. For the setting see on ch. 40:1.

Renew their strength. See on ch. 40:31. Here and in future chapters Isaiah presents the Lord as Israel's Friend and Deliverer from the power of Babylon (see chs. 43:14; 44:26–28; 45:1–6; 46:1, 2; 47; 48:14, 20). Babylon, which placed such great confidence in its idols and vaunted itself against God and against His people, is doomed, but glorious deliverance is to come to the saints. The deliverance of Israel from Babylonian captivity and their return to Jerusalem is a type of the deliverance of God's people from the power of the enemy in the last days, just before their entry into the heavenly Jerusalem (see Rev. 18:1–4; 22:14).

2. The righteous man. That is, Cyrus (see on chs. 44:28; 45:1), king of Persia, who destroyed the Babylonian Empire and liberated the Jews (2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1–4; 5:13–15; 6:3–5). Cyrus was raised up by God “in righteousness,” to build His city and to set His captives free (Isa. 45:13). Cyrus was a type of Christ, who was also called “in righteousness” (ch. 42:6) and whose task it was “to proclaim liberty to the captives” (ch. 61:1, 2). As Cyrus brought judgment upon ancient Babylon, so Christ will bring judgment upon modern spiritual Babylon (Rev. 16:19; 17:1, 5; 18:2, 21). Cyrus was highly honored in ancient times as a man of integrity and courage, and unique among ancient Oriental conquerors for his high personal character and the justice and wisdom of his decrees. It was God who raised up His servant Cyrus and subdued the nations of earth before him (see Isa. 44:28; 45:1–5; see on ch. 41:4, 8).

The first half of ch. 41:2 reads literally, “Who caused to rise up [one] from the east, righteousness [or victory, or vindication] will meet him at his foot.” Isaiah here describes the victorious advance of Cyrus, with one after another of his enemies bowing in submission before him.

3. The way. Cyrus wrote a new chapter in Oriental history. His conquests extended from the shores of the Aegean Sea, in the west, to Parthia, the regions of the Jaxartes River, and the great steppes beyond the Caspian Sea, to the east. The rapidity and vast extent of his conquests gave him the reputation of being the greatest Oriental monarch up to his time. Such was his fame that even today his name is a household word throughout the Orient. Unlike conquerors who had preceded him, he was generous and relatively

⁷Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 30:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

humane toward the enemies he conquered. No general before him was his equal as a strategist and a master of men.

4. *Who hath wrought?* Was it Cyrus who raised himself up to be the great conqueror of antiquity, or was the hand of God at work in the great movements then going on in the East? It is God who orders and disposes in things of earth as of heaven. It is He who allots to men the tasks they are to perform for Him, and who directs His servants at the proper times to execute His decrees. The purposes of God have been ordained from the very beginning, and from age to age God calls men to fulfill His will.

5. *The ends of the earth.* Even the remote regions of earth were astonished and terrified at the rapid conquests of Cyrus (see on Dan. 8:4). Supernatural power seemed to accompany him and direct him in the attainment of his every goal.

6. *They helped.* In an endeavor to halt the conquests of Cyrus, nations consulted together. Lydia was in alliance with Egypt and Babylon against Cyrus.

7. *The carpenter.* Craftsmen engaged in the manufacture of images joined efforts, one workman encouraging and assisting another in the multiplication of gods they hoped would deliver them from the hand of Cyrus. The nations of the earth are pictured as looking to their false gods to thwart a movement inspired and directed by the Lord of heaven.

8. *But thou, Israel.* To the nations of earth Cyrus came as a conqueror, but to Israel as a deliverer. In calling Cyrus to His service God had not rejected Israel. God reaffirms the call made to their fathers (Ex. 19:5, 6). For the relationship of the names Israel and Jacob, see on Gen. 32:28. The two are used interchangeably, both of Jacob and of his descendants.

My servant. The term “servant,” Heb. *‘ebed*, is characteristic of this entire section of Isaiah (chs. 40–66), and, together with the idea of deliverance through the Great Deliverer, constitutes its theme (see on Ruth 2:20). *‘Ebed* combines the idea of worship with that of service. An *‘ebed* not only served his master, but also, presumably, honored him as well. The term thus stood for much more than mere service for wages, implying that the service rendered was the outward manifestation of an inner attitude. Such service was not forced, but rendered willingly (see Ex. 21:5, 6). Hand service and heart service went together. The helping hand gave evidence of a loving heart. Similarly, a “servant” of the Lord is one who loves and serves Him—one who renders loving service.

In Hebrew the word *’adon* means both “lord” and “master,” and is the complement of *‘ebed*, “servant.” When the word “Lord,” written without small capitals, appears in the OT, it stands for the Hebrew word *’Adonai*, as in Ps. 8:1 (see Vol. I, p. 172).

As used in this section of Isaiah, *‘ebed* sometimes refers to Israel as the “servant” of the Lord, as here and in chs. 41:9; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3, 5; 54:17; 63:17; 65:8, 9, 13, 15; 66:14.

Used of Israel, *‘ebed* implied the covenant relationship, by virtue of which Israel had become the “servant” of Jehovah (see Ex. 19:3–9; 24:3–8). Under this covenant relationship Israel was to worship, or serve, the Lord, obeying all His commands, and, as His representative, lead all other nations to serve and obey Him (see pp. 26–30). In the

setting of the covenant relationship, as Isaiah here uses *‘ebed* of Israel, the term is full of meaning that generally escapes the English reader.

Less often, *‘Ebed* designates Messiah as the “Servant” of the Lord for the salvation of mankind (chs. 42:1; 49:6; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11). Thus, in ch. 53, the Messiah is represented as the “suffering Servant” of Jehovah (see chs. 52:13; 53:2, 11). Prior to the coming of Jesus, Jewish expositors consistently recognized the application of ch. 53 to Messiah, but since have generally denied its Messianic import and set forth the explanation that here, as elsewhere, the “servant” designates either a contemporary person or Israel as a people.

In ch. 56:6 *‘ebed* designates Jewish proselytes, that is, Gentiles converted to the Jewish faith. In ch. 65:15 *‘ebed* may be understood as referring particularly to Christians, inasmuch as the “servants” of the Lord here mentioned are to be called by “another name” (see 1 Peter 2:9, 10). Once, in Isa. 44:26, *‘ebed* seems to apply to the prophet Isaiah himself.

9. *The ends of the earth.* God called Abraham out of Ur to be His representative and to be the founder of national Israel. Four hundred and thirty years after Abraham entered the Land of Promise (Ex. 12:40, 41; Gal. 3:17) Israel was called out of Egypt, again to enter the Promised Land, but now as a “kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Ex. 19:5, 6). Here, however, Isaiah probably refers specifically to the gathering of the exiles from the lands whither they had been scattered (see Isa. 11:16; 56:8; etc.).

From the chief men. Literally, “from the remote parts of it.”

I have chosen thee. Israel belonged to God by right of divine election, to be His chosen representatives in the earth (see pp. 26, 27). He had not cast them off, in spite of their sins and in spite of the scattering of the northern tribes by Assyria and the exile of Judah, soon to be accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar. This thought Isaiah emphasizes again and again (see chs. 42:1; 43:1, 10; 44:8, 21; 45:4; 55:3, 4; 65:8, 9, 22). The discouragement of Israel implicit in ch. 40:1, 2 was due to the fear that God had forsaken them (see on 2 Kings 19:30; see also Isa. 37:31; 40:1–5, 9–11; cf. Isa. 5:1–7).

10. *Fear thou not.* Outwardly there was much of which the professed people could be afraid in the days of Isaiah. The northern kingdom, Israel, had been wiped out of existence by Assyrian military might, and it appeared that Judah could not long endure. The people were greatly in need of a message of comfort and hope, and Isaiah sought to inspire them with courage and cheer (see chs. 40:1, 2; 41:13, 14; 43:5; 44:2).

I am with thee. The promise implicit in the name Immanuel (see on ch. 7:14), that God would be with His people, was desperately needed by them in Isaiah’s own time.

11. *Ashamed and confounded.* This promise was impressively fulfilled in the destruction of Sennacherib’s army. He who fights against the people of God fights against God Himself. With the help of the Lord the weakest child of His is more than a match against God or against His people will ultimately perish, whereas the meek and faithful will inherit the earth (Ps. 37:9–11, 20, 29, 37, 38; Matt. 5:5). Instead of “perish” the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs has “dry up.”

12. *As nothing.* Utter annihilation will be the final fate of the enemies of God (Ps. 37:9, 10, 20; Prov. 10:25; Obadiah 16; Mal. 4:1). The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs omits the words “thou shalt seek them and shalt not find them.”

13. Hold thy right hand. A token of agreement and friendship (see on Amos 3:3). Here, it is a sign of the covenant relationship. Israel belonged to God, and might enjoy His guidance, strength, and protection.

14. Thou worm Jacob. God reminds the people of Israel that they have no value or strength of themselves. Without God they are a weak, helpless, and insignificant people, to be despised and trampled under foot (see Job 25:6; Ps. 22:6).

Thy redeemer. The Holy One of Israel was the Redeemer of His people. They were lost and seemingly without hope, but He would perform for them the service of a near kinsman (Lev. 25:47–49; see on Ruth 2:20). Isaiah frequently presents this picture of God as the Redeemer of His people (Isa. 35:9, 10; 43:1, 14; 44:6, 22–24; 47:4; 48:17, 20; 49:26; 52:9; 54:5). Job also recognized God as his Redeemer (Job 19:25).

The Holy One. See on ch. 40:25.

15. Thresh the mountains. In the ancient Orient, sledges equipped with heavy spikes were drawn over the grain to thresh out the wheat (see Amos 1:3). Israel had been cruelly threshed by Assyria, and Babylon was similarly to come against Judah. But eventually the one threshed would become the thresher (see Jer. 51:2, 33; cf. 7:21, 22, 25, 27; Micah 4:13). The “mountains” represent the wicked powers of earth (see Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35).

16. Fan them. Literally, “winnow them.” After threshing, the chaff was winnowed from the grain. In the day of God’s judgment, when He arises to thresh the earth, the wicked will prove to be worthless chaff (Ps. 1:4; Dan. 2:35; Mal. 4:1; see on Matt. 3:12; Matt. 13:41, 42).

17. Seek water. When God’s judgments are upon the wicked they will find themselves without either food or water, but the people of God will have their wants supplied (see on ch. 33:16). It is also true that the spiritually hungry and thirsty peoples of earth will be satisfied (see Isa. 55:1; Matt. 5:6).

18. A pool of water. Those parts of earth to which the blessings of the gospel have not come, Isaiah often pictures as dry and arid regions in need of the refreshing water of divine grace (chs. 12:3; 35:6, 7; 43:19, 20; 44:3). Here he forecasts the experience of Israel if the nation will return to the Lord, and the marvelous transformation to be brought about by the proclamation of the gospel (see on Eze. 47:1–12). Christ is the water of life for a thirsty world (John 4:14, 15; John 7:37; see Rev. 22:1–3; cf. Zech. 13:1). It is literally true also that this once beautiful world has, in many places, become parched and barren.

19. The cedar. This verse continues the thought of v. 18. Regions once barren of God’s grace will blossom as the rose. Beautiful gardens of righteousness will bloom where the truths of God’s Word have once been unknown. The whole earth will be entirely transformed when it hears and receives the message of Christ’s sacrifice and love. See on ch. 35:1; cf. ch. 55:12, 13.

Shittah tree. Literally, “acacia.” “Shittah” is simply a transliteration of the Heb. *shittah*.

Oil tree. That is, the “olive tree,” the primary source of oil for various uses in ancient Palestine.

Fir. The Phoenician juniper.

Pine. The identity of this tree is uncertain.

Box tree. Probably the Lebanon cypress.

20. *The hand of the Lord.* The efforts of man are inadequate to transform this sinful world. If this evil earth is to be changed, it must be through the influences of God's Holy Spirit, and man must understand the need of cooperating with God if he would see a better world. God created man righteous, and He alone can re-create him a righteous being (see 2 Cor. 5:17). It is the Lord who implants in man's heart a longing for holiness (see Phil. 2:13). Whatever we see in this world of peace and beauty, of righteousness and purity, is a result of the operation of the Spirit of God.

21. *Produce your cause.* God challenges the worshipers of false gods to set forth convincing evidence of their power. Here (vs. 21–26) the ability to foretell the future is proposed as a test of divine power. In this section of his book Isaiah repeatedly points to predictive prophecy as proof that the true God is all He claims to be (see chs. 41:4; 42:9; 43:9; 44:7; 45:11, 21; 46:9, 10; 48:3–7, 16). The other great proof of the true God is His creative power (see on Isa. 40:12, 26; cf. Ps. 96:5).

22. *The former things.* Let the idols plead their own cause. Let them show what they have done for the world. Have they done anything to make it a better place in which to live? Have they brought in righteousness, mercy, justice, or truth? What can they reveal of the secrets of the remote past? Can they tell how the world came into being or how man came into existence?

Things for to come. Let the idols predict, if they can, the nature of things to come. Let them attempt to open the future as if it were a book. God can, but not they. He knows the future as well as the past. Satan knows something of what is to come, but what he knows he has learned from what God has revealed. Also, he can partly predict the course that men under his control will take. But only God can actually foretell the future.

Having issued His challenge to the worshipers of false gods, the Lord gives a series of startling predictions regarding the future. There are prophecies of Cyrus (chs. 44:28; 45:1), of the coming of the Messiah to give His life for man (ch. 53), of His divine commission (ch. 61:1–3), of the giving of the gospel to the world (chs. 54:1–3; 60:1–5), of the humbling of Babylon and her idols (chs. 46:1, 2; 47:1–5; 48:14), of the deliverance of the Jews from Babylonian captivity (ch. 51:11), of the restoration of the earth to its Edenic beauty (chs. 65:19–25; 66:22, 23), and of the judgment of the wicked (ch. 66:14–16, 24). The fulfillment of these predictions is conclusive evidence that Jehovah is the true God.

23. *Do good, or do evil.* The heathen believed in both good and evil spirits. Both were worshiped. Good spirits were worshiped, presumably, in order to receive good from them, and evil spirits were propitiated in order to avert their anger.

24. *Ye are of nothing.* This is Isaiah's verdict concerning idols (see 1 Cor. 8:4). Men who manufacture such gods and worship them are an abomination to the world. They bring evil, and not good, to their fellows, and degrade themselves and their fellow men (see Deut. 7:25, 26).

25. *From the north.* See on v. 2. Cyrus is represented as coming from both the north and the east. Babylonia is to the east of Judah, but entry from Mesopotamia into Palestine was always from the north, near Carchemish, at the bend of the Euphrates. For this reason Babylon or Assyria is often referred to in connection with the north (see on Jer. 1:14; 3:18; 4:6; etc.).

Shall he call upon my name. From 2 Chron. 36:23 and Ezra 1:2 it is clear that, to some degree at least, Cyrus came to acknowledge the God of heaven.

Come ... upon mortar. Meaning, “tread ... upon mortar.” Mortar was mixed by treading it with the feet (Nahum 3:14). With the help of God Cyrus was able to tread down his enemies (Isa. 41:2; 45:1) and to conquer the East.

26. Who hath declared? See on vs. 21–23. Isaiah predicted the conquests of Cyrus, who proved to be one of the most able and renowned conquerors of history. But which of the gods of Babylon had predicted his coming? What a remarkable opportunity there was for some famous god of the East to foretell the coming of Cyrus, that his devotees might say, “He is right; his foreknowledge and divinity prove it!”

27. The first shall say to Zion. Literally, “first to Zion, behold, behold them.” The context (v. 26) and the second part of the parallelism of v. 26 imply that God is here addressing Zion. The heathen gods had failed to reveal the rise of Cyrus (v. 26), but God had done so, and that long before his birth. All might see if they would.

28. No counsellor. There was no one among all the wise men and soothsayers of the East able to foretell the future. None could answer Jehovah’s challenge.

29. Confusion. Heb. *tohu*, “emptiness,” “void” (see on Gen. 1:2).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 Ed 286
10 AA 86; DA 283; Ed 116; MB 152; MH 251; ML 292
10, 13 PK 316; 8T 39
13 CG 525; Ed 259; Te 105; 7T 71
14 PK 316
17 GC 629; MH 124; PP 413
17, 18 MB 31
18 6T 86
18–20 8T 39

CHAPTER 42

1 *The office of Christ, graced with meekness and constancy.* 5 *God’s promise unto him.* 10 *An exhortation to praise God for his gospel.* 17 *He reproveth the people of incredulity.*

1. My servant. For the setting of ch. 42, see on ch. 40:1. “Servant” is here a designation for Christ (see on ch. 41:8). In Matt. 12:18 this prophecy is specifically applied to Christ. Indeed, many expressions in this chapter can apply to no other. Jesus frequently referred to Himself as having been sent by His Father to carry out an assigned mission (John 4:34; 6:38; 14:31). Concerning the nature of His work He declared that He “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28) and that He was among His people “as he that serveth” (Luke 22:27). Here and in the chapters that follow, Isaiah sets forth the most complete picture of Messiah and His earthly mission to be found anywhere in the OT. Largely because of these prophecies Isaiah is known as “the gospel prophet.”

Delighteth. See on Matt. 3:17.

My spirit upon him. Here Isaiah clearly refers to the three members of the Godhead: “I [the Father] have put my spirit [the Holy Spirit] upon him [the “Servant,” Messiah]” (Matt. 12:18). In a special sense the Holy Spirit came upon Christ at His baptism (see on Matt. 3:16; Luke 4:18; see also John 1:32, 33; Acts 10:38).

Judgment. Or, “justice.” Christ’s mission to the Gentiles is prominent in this section of Isaiah (see chs. 45:22; 49:6, 7, 12, 22; 54:3, 5; 56:3–8; 60:3–5; 62:2). That the message

of divine grace was not to be alone for the Jews, but for all men, is one of the outstanding truths uniquely set forth by Isaiah.

2. To be heard in the street. The Messiah was to accomplish a mighty work in a quiet and unobtrusive way, without pomp or show.

3. A bruised reed. See on Matt. 12:20. Messiah will minister tenderly to the weak, the bruised, and the oppressed. He is a friend to the humble, contrite sinner—to every man who finds himself in need. Men who appear to themselves and to others almost beyond hope will find in Him the comfort, strength, and courage they so much need.

Smoking flax. That is, a linen wick flickering and ready to go out.

4. Judgment. Or, “justice.” In spite of the difficulties He may have to face, Messiah will persevere toward the goal of restoring the just law of the universe to this earth.

The isles. Or, “coastlands,” a common OT designation for all countries bordering on the Mediterranean, here equivalent to “Gentiles.”

Shall wait for his law. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads, “He shall cause to possess [or, inherit] His law.” The Heb. *torah*, “law,” includes all the revealed will of God (see on Ps. 19:7; Prov. 3:1). Isaiah here envisions the conversion of the Gentiles (see pp. 28–30).

5. Created the heavens. See on ch. 40:12, 26, 28.

6. In righteousness. The plan of salvation is a means not only of rescuing men from sin but also of vindicating the righteous character of God before the entire universe. See on John 17:4, 6.

Hold thine hand. For the way in which Christ was guided day by day in the fulfillment of the plan for His mission to earth, see on Mark 3:13; Luke 2:49; see DA 208, 417. We are to follow in His steps.

A covenant. Christ was to be not only the mediator of the covenant but the covenant itself. He was its center and substance. He was not only to bring peace but to be “our peace,” that we, who were once “strangers from the covenants of promise,” might be “made nigh” to God by His precious blood (Eph. 2:12–14; Micah 5:5).

A light. See pp. 28, 29. Without Christ, men grope and stumble about in darkness. But in Christ the most unfortunate and benighted have the privilege of finding the light of life (see Isa. 49:6; Luke 2:32; John 1:4–9; Acts 13:47).

7. To open. See on Luke 4:18. The restoration of physical eyesight upon various occasions testified that Christ had power to impart sight to men’s souls (John 9:1–9; cf. Isa. 61:1–3).

8. My name. For the name Jehovah, “Lord,” see Vol. I, pp. 171–173; see on Ex. 3:14, 15.

9. Former things. Predictions made by Isaiah and other prophets in earlier days had already been fulfilled. The fulfillment of these former prophecies gave weight and value to the striking predictions now set before the people (see Jer. 28:9).

Spring forth. Prophecies are like seed. When Isaiah spoke, there was not the slightest evidence that his words would ever be fulfilled, but seven centuries later those of this passage met a glorious fulfillment in Christ.

10. Sing unto the Lord. Days of darkness and discouragement had overtaken Judah, and darker days lay ahead, but Isaiah proclaimed a message of comfort and hope (ch. 40:1, 2). As the people looked forward to the glorious future they could even now rejoice and sing and thank God for His wonderful mercy and love.

11. Kedar. An Arabian tribe descended from Ishmael (Gen. 25:13; see Isa. 21:13, 16; Eze. 27:21). They had black tents (S. of Sol. 1:5), and kept flocks and camels (Isa. 60:7; Jer. 49:28, 29); Here they are mentioned together with “the inhabitants of the rock,” which is Sela (see on Isa. 16:1), or Petra (see on 2 Kings 14:7), as representatives of distant peoples that would hear the message of God’s grace and turn to Him with praise and singing (see pp. 28–30).

12. The islands. That is, coastlands bordering on the Mediterranean (see on v. 4).

13. Jealousy. Or, “zeal,” or “fury.” The Lord is zealous for the honor and integrity of His name (see v. 8).

14. Long time. Heb. *‘olam*, literally, “for an age” (see on Ex. 21:6). Here, obviously, “forever” indicates a limited period of time; it comes to an end.

Holden my peace. The hour of God’s vengeance has finally come. For a long time the Lord has permitted the wicked to go their evil ways (see Eccl. 8:11). Now He will call them to account, now He will perform, “his strange work” (Isa. 28:21), now He will reward evil men according to their deeds.

Destroy and devour. Literally, “gasp and pant after.” Here in figurative language the prophet pictures the end of divine forbearance.

15. Make waste mountains. Divine vengeance on those who have despised mercy is here pictured in highly figurative language. For the literal convulsions that will shake the earth when Christ returns see Rev. 6:14–17; 16:17–21; cf. Isa. 24:1, 3, 5, 19–21.

16. The blind. That is, those who have been spiritually blind (see on v. 7). Divine retribution will fall upon those who have deliberately rejected light (vs. 13–15), whereas those who are sincere, though benighted, will come to the light, and will be given an opportunity to accept the gracious mercy of God.

Crooked things straight. See on ch. 40:4.

17. Greatly ashamed. When the Lord reveals Himself (v. 14) those who have trusted in false gods will have irrefutable evidence of the folly of their ways. Their gods will prove powerless to help them.

18. Hear, ye deaf. See on chs. 6:9, 10; 42:7, 16. These words are addressed to the professed people of God (see v. 19), many of whom are spiritually blind and deaf. Isaiah calls upon all who acknowledge the name of the Lord, but whose spiritual perception has been impaired, to open their ears and their eyes that they may perceive the revealed will of God.

19. Who is blind, but my servant? It is not entirely clear whether the “servant” here refers to Messiah, as the context of the chapter as a whole (see v. 1) may imply, or to Israel, as the more immediate context of vs. 16, 18, 20 suggests (see on ch. 41:8). In the book of Isaiah blindness generally refers to spiritual blindness on the part of God’s professed people (see on ch. 6:9, 10). This is true of the “blind” of ch. 42:16. Some have suggested that v. 19 refers to Messiah’s being blind to the faults of His followers (cf. 1T 707, where the words of this text are borrowed to express another thought). However, vs. 18, 20 imply that the “blind” “servant” of v. 19 does wrong in not seeing, and that God calls on him to amend his ways. The “blind” and “deaf” “servant” of v. 19 therefore probably designates God’s people (see Rev. 3:17–20).

20. Thou observest not. See ch. 43:8; see on chs. 6:9, 10; 42:7, 16, 18.

21. Magnify the law. Christ magnified the “law,” Heb. *torah* (see on Ps. 19:7; Prov. 3:1), both by precept and by example, proving it to be wise and just. Obedience to the

revealed will of God always promotes righteousness, happiness, and peace among men. In His Sermon on the Mount, Christ magnified the law by applying its principles to the motives of the heart as well as to the outward acts (see on Matt. 5:17, 20, 21). Christ's life of perfect compliance with every requirement of the law confirmed all that He proclaimed concerning it (John 15:10; 17:4; Rom. 8:3, 4).

22. *A people robbed and spoiled.* God had warned His people that the result of disobedience would be woe and disaster (Deut. 28:15–68), and these warnings were now in process of fulfillment. The ten tribes of Israel were gone; Judah was desolate, and many of its people had been taken captive by Assyria, while others had to hide in dens and caves. A worse fate descended upon the land a century later with the repeated invasions of Nebuchadnezzar.

23. *Who will hearken?* God had permitted trouble to come in order to bring the people to their senses and make them willing to hearken to Him. Would they now listen to His words of wisdom and life? Or would they follow their own counsel, like their fathers in ages past?

24. *Who gave Jacob?* God had permitted the Assyrian invasion (see on chs. 8:7, 8; 10:5, 6). By their stubborn refusal to obey, the people of Judah brought suffering upon themselves. When they refused to serve the Lord He withdrew His protecting hand from them and permitted the enemy to come in and devastate their land.

25. *Laid it not to heart.* The judgments that had come upon the nation were largely in vain. In spite of their sufferings the people failed to comprehend the terrible nature of sin and the reason for their plight. Such a situation presaged further trouble. Sennacherib's judgments were to be followed by the much more serious visitation that came upon the nation in the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 DA 74; MH 33; PK 692

1–4AA 224

1–79T 64

2, 3 MH 31

2–4DA 261; PK 693

3 DA 294, 489; MM 121; 5T 469

4 AA 23; CD 77; DA 34, 206; Ev 301; FE 199, 281; MH 19, 134; 6T 125

5 PK 315

5–7MH 33; 9T 139

6, 7 AA 10

6–9PK 693

7 WM 59

10–12MH 33

16 GC 346; MH 33

16, 17 PK 378

16–219T 138

19 1T 707

21 AA 505; DA 206; Ed 76; EW 215; GC 264, 466, 503; MB 49; ML 100; PK 224, 693;
RC 66; 2T 201; 6T 352; 7T 104; 8T 197

21, 22 TM 96

23 9T 139

CHAPTER 43

1 *The Lord comforteth the church with his promises. 8 He appealeth to the people for witness of his omnipotency. 14 He foretelleth them the destruction of Babylon, 18 and his wonderful deliverance of his people. 22 He reproveth the people as inexcusable.*

1. But now. For the setting see on ch. 40:1. The threatenings and reproofs of the closing verses of the preceding chapter are now placed in contrast with promises of hope. Judgment is followed by mercy; God's love is greater than His wrath. "In all their affliction he was afflicted" (ch. 63:9). In spite of their transgressions He loved them still and desired nothing more than to have them return wholeheartedly to Him.

That created thee. See on ch. 40:12, 26, 28. God had created Israel, as a nation, to be an honor to His name (vs. 7, 21). In this they had thus far failed, but God sought to impress upon them that they were still His people, called by His name, and ordained to be His special representatives and witnesses among men (chs. 43:10; 44:8).

Fear not. See on ch. 41:10.

Called thee. See on Gen. 32:28.

2. Through the waters. Even when they found themselves in the most dire straits, God's people had the assurance that He would be with them to sustain and to save. They were not promised freedom from trouble and affliction, but comfort and eventual deliverance. Various times Israel had passed "through fire and through water," but God saved them (Ps. 66:12; cf. Isa. 8:7, 8). "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Ps. 34:19; cf. vs. 17, 18). In Scripture, water and fire often appear as purifying agents (Num. 8:7; Job 23:10; cf. 2 Peter 3:5-7).

3. Holy One. See on ch. 40:25.

Ethiopia and Seba. See on Gen. 10:6, 7. Some have suggested that this verse refers to the transfer of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba into the hands of Persia in return for her liberation of the Jews from Babylonian captivity. Cyrus issued the first decree permitting the Jews to leave Babylon and rebuild their Temple (2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:2-4), and his son Cambyses conquered Egypt (see Vol. III, p. 326). The dominant thought here is the preciousness of Israel in the eyes of the Lord. See also Eze. 29:18, 19.

4. I have loved thee. See Deut. 7:7, 8. Because of His love for Israel God will do anything needful for them. In Moses' day this love was demonstrated by deliverance from Pharaoh, and in Isaiah's day, by deliverance from Sennacherib. God's love for Israel was without partiality, for God is no "respector of persons" (Acts 10:34). It is not nationality, but character, that counts with God (Acts 10:35).

5. From the east. These words had a partial fulfillment in the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity. They were to have a further fulfillment in the ingathering of the faithful from all parts of the world during the Christian Era (see pp. 35, 36). Their complete fulfillment will be only when the righteous are gathered from the four corners of the earth at the time of Christ's return (Matt. 8:11; 24:31; Luke 13:29).

6. Keep not back. In poetic language Isaiah continues his picture of the conversion of men from all nations. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads instead of "my sons" and "my daughters," "your sons" and "your daughters."

7. Called by my name. And, therefore, belonging to God. This includes Gentiles as well as Jews, for they are "fellowheirs" (Eph. 3:6), called to be "a chosen generation" to "shew forth the praises of him" who called them "out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Compare Acts 11:26; James 2:7.

8. *The blind.* See on chs. 6:9, 10; 42:7, 18–20. The people of earth, heretofore “blind” and “deaf” to spiritual things, are summoned to examine evidence that the Lord is the true God, and to decide for or against truth (ch. 43:9).

9. *All the nations.* The nations of earth are summoned to present their case before the court of the universe. They are to have an opportunity to vindicate themselves, but failing this, they are called to acknowledge that the Lord is God and that His ways are truth. Henceforth there will be no excuse for blindness (see v. 8).

10. *My witnesses.* See pp. 26–29. All who acknowledge God (v. 9) are commissioned to bear witness concerning Him before the world. God has given many proofs of His divine wisdom and power, as in Egypt (Ex. 3:12–15), and on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:36–39). In a special way in ancient times the Jews were to be God’s witnesses. As a nation they were to be a living testimony that the Lord is God. The remnant in Jerusalem after Sennacherib’s invasion was, to the world of that day, a testimony of God’s love for His people and His power to deliver them. Even today, though no longer God’s chosen people, the Jewish nation is a striking testimony that God’s word is true. The church today has a role similar to that of Israel in ancient times (see 1 Peter 2:9).

11. *Beside me.* In Moses’ day God saved His people from the power of Egypt, and in Isaiah’s day, from the power of Assyria. Through all ages He has saved them from the power of sin. When Jesus came into the world He came for the express purpose of saving “his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). There is no other means of salvation (Acts 4:12).

12. *No strange god.* That is, no idol (Deut. 32:16; Isa. 42:8; 44:10; Jer. 3:13). When Israel served strange gods the Lord could not manifest His power in their behalf. He had foretold that He would bring His people into the Promised Land, save them from the hand of their enemies, and bring them back from Babylonian captivity. No strange god could have made these predictions. In all these things the children of Israel were witnesses to God’s foreknowledge and faithfulness.

13. *Who shall let it?* In contemporary English, “Who shall hinder it?” Who among men can hinder God? He carries out His own purposes regardless of men. When Assyria attempted to destroy Judah, against God’s will, God destroyed their besieging forces (chs. 14:24–27; 37:33–36).

14. *Your redeemer.* See on v. 11.

Holy One. See on ch. 40:25.

I have sent to Babylon. Isaiah herewith foretells the Babylonian captivity a century in advance. In the certain knowledge of what is to be, God speaks of future events as if they were already accomplished (see Vol. I, p. 27). He has demonstrated His power in the saving of His people from the hands of Sennacherib; now He foretells relationships between His people and Babylon. Lest the Babylonians consider their conquest of Judah an evidence of the superiority of their gods over the God of Israel, He foretells the event and declares it to be in fulfillment of His eternal purpose (see ch. 10:5–15).

Nobles. Heb. *barichim*. This word should be rendered “fugitives.”

Whose cry is in the ships. The meaning of the Hebrew thus translated is obscure. The LXX reads “shall be bound in fetters,” and the Vulgate, “in their gallant ships.” The RSV renders the entire clause, “the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentations.”

15. *Your King.* God was King of Israel under the theocracy (Ex. 15:18; Ps. 10:16; 29:10; 146:10; Isa. 44:6; Rev. 11:15). His outstanding attributes are here set forth: His character, the Holy One; His power, the Creator; and His authority, King.

16. *A way in the sea.* An allusion to the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:16; Ps. 77:19). As God had displayed His mighty power in delivering His people from Egyptian bondage, so He would yet display His power in delivering them from Babylon. The same power is available today to deliver men from captivity to sin.

17. *The army and the power.* Literally, “a power, a great one.”

Quenched as tow. That is, “as a [flax] wick” (see on ch. 42:3). At the Red Sea the Egyptian armies were extinguished like the flame of a wick. The highway of deliverance for God’s people became for the armies of Pharaoh a way of death.

18. *Remember ye not.* God had done great things for His people in ages past, but these would be small in comparison with what He would do for them in the future.

19. *Rivers in the desert.* Probably an allusion to the stream that followed Israel in the wilderness (see Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:8; Ps. 78:15, 16; 1 Cor. 10:4). Here the prophet’s vision is carried forward to the great work God will accomplish in bringing the message of His grace to lands now dry and barren (see on Eze. 47:1, 8, 9; see pp. 27–30, 35; see also Isa. 35:6, 7; 41:18; 44:3). The crossing of the desert was as truly a miracle as the crossing of the Red Sea. God’s power is no less today. As God opened a way to the earthly Canaan, so He will also open one to the heavenly Canaan.

20. *The beast of the field.* The picture is highly figurative, attributing to wild animals the emotions and attitudes of men. The entire face of the wilderness was to be transformed. Beautiful gardens would replace the burning sands; flourishing pastures and fertile fields would replace desolate wastes; and the wild creatures of the desert would rejoice in the remarkable transformation. These glorious results were to follow the proclamation of the gospel in the spiritually desolate regions of earth.

21. *I formed for myself.* See Deut. 7:7, 8; cf. Eze. 16:1–14.

22. *Weary of me.* Without the care and blessing of God Israel would never have become a nation (v. 21), but the people did not appreciate what God had done for them (see Deut. 6:10–12; 8:7–18; Isa. 5:1–7; Eze. 16:15; Hosea 2:5–9). They became absorbed in the things of earth and ceased to have an interest in the things of God.

23. *Caused thee to serve.* Or, “burdened you” (RSV). Compare Isa. 1:11, 12; Mal. 2:13. God’s requirements had not been burdensome. What the Lord asked His people to do was for their benefit, not His. He had not ordained the ritual law for *His* good, but for *theirs*, in order that they might understand the way of salvation more perfectly.

24. *Made me to serve.* Or, “burdened me” (RSV). Because man sinned, Christ must leave heaven and take “upon him the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:7). It was our sins that caused the King of glory to become a servant among men. God’s requirements had been reasonable, and were all for the good of men, but they had been unwilling to do their part. God was utterly weary of their hypocritical pretense at worship (Isa. 1:13, 14).

25. *Blotteth out.* Isaiah clearly sets forth Christ as man’s Saviour from sin. It is He who forgives men their sins. Divine forgiveness is not merely a legal transaction that wipes from the record the sins of the past, but a transforming power that eradicates sin from the life. By blotting out transgression God transforms sinners into saints. He thus effectually brings an end to sin. The doctrine of atonement for sin is clearly set forth in the OT as well as in the NT.

Not remember thy sins. Compare Isa. 1:18; Micah 7:19. That is, once they are confessed, forsaken, and forgiven. God treats a repentant sinner as if he had never sinned (see Eze. 18:20, 21). Christ's words to the woman taken in sin are for all: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

26. Put me in remembrance. Compare Isa. 1:18; Heb. 4:16. The passage may be paraphrased: Set before me your righteous deeds, if you can, that you might be justified thereby. If you have anything good to say in your behalf, say it; I will gladly acquit you of your record of sin if your deeds are such that they will justify you.

Let us plead. In contemporary legal phraseology Isaiah hales the people of Israel before the bar of divine justice.

27. Thy first father. That is, Adam, the father of the human race, since whose time sin has been in the world.

Thy teachers. That is, the leaders of the people.

28. Therefore I have profaned. Judgment had fallen upon the people of Judah because of their transgressions. The heathen had bitterly reproached them when the armies of Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem (chs. 36:4–20; 37:10–13).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–28TM 96

1 DA 327, 479; ML 184; TM 516

1–3DA 382

1–4MH 122; PK 723

2 PK 512

4 DA 327

5 MH 123

8–139T 137

10 CT 243; FE 214; GW 13; MYP 200; LS 209; 5T 367; 7T 138

10–12AA 10

12 COL 299; DA 347; Ed 308; MH 100; 6T 444

19, 20 6T 86

21 Ed 174; PK 500

22 8T 275

25 GC 483; MH 123; 1T 543

25, 26 PK 723; TM 520

CHAPTER 44

1 *God comforteth the church with his promises. 7 The vanity of idols, 9 and folly of idol makers. 21 He exhorteth to praise God for his redemption and omnipotency.*

1. Israel, whom I have chosen. See on ch. 43:10. Having rebuked His people for their sins (ch. 43:22–28), the Lord now speaks words of comfort and courage. They are to remember Him as the One who chose them and loves them, who has mercy on them and saves them.

2. Jesurun. A poetical name for Israel meaning "upright one" (see on Deut. 32:15). God reminds Israel that He has chosen her to be "an holy nation" and to obey His voice (Ex. 19:5, 6).

3. Him that is thirsty. Or, "[the] thirsty land." The first part of the verse is symbolic, explained in the second part. The outpouring of God's Holy Spirit is compared to

refreshing showers of rain (Joel 2:23, 28, 29). The “thirsty” are those who thirst for God and His righteousness (Ps. 42:1, 2; Matt. 5:6; John 4:13, 14).

4. *As willows.* The people upon whom God’s Spirit was poured would flourish like trees by the banks of flowing streams (see Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:8; Eze. 47:12).

6. *The King of Israel.* Here are set forth some of the most striking attributes of God: He is (1) the Lord, (2) Israel’s King, (3) Israel’s Redeemer, (4) Commander of the heavenly hosts, (5) the Eternal, the “first” and the “last,” and (6) the only true God. In vs. 9–20 Isaiah sets God forth in contrast with idols.

7. *And who, as I?* Or, “Who is like me?” (RSV). It is God who orders and disposes the affairs of earth; it is He who knows the past and declares the future. It is He who appointed Israel as a righteous and eternal people. In all of this lies evidence that He is the true God; idols cannot do what He has done (see on ch. 41:4, 21–26).

Since I appointed. By a rearrangement of the Hebrew text of this clause and the next, the RSV reads, “Who has announced from of old the things to come?” There is no fundamental alteration of the thought.

8. *Fear ye not.* See on ch. 41:10.

No God. Literally, “no Rock”; Heb. *šur*, a common Scriptural term for God, denoting His enduring qualities and His strength (see Deut. 32:4; 2 Sam. 22:3; 23:3; Ps. 18:2; cf. Isa. 26:4). Israel has nothing to fear with God as their strength and defense.

9. *Vanity.* Heb. *tohu*, “nothingness,” “emptiness” (see on Gen. 1:2; Isa. 41:29).

Their delectable things. That is, things in which they take delight, particularly things connected with idol worship.

Their own witnesses. The blind, senseless idols bear eloquent testimony to the fact that they are blind and know nothing.

14. *The rain.* Men may plant the seed from which the tree sprouts, but only God can make it grow. Without the power of God there would be no tree from which to carve an idol

15. *Yea, he maketh a god.* It is a mere matter of chance which piece of wood is used for fuel and which for the idol!

16. *He burneth part.* The folly of making a god out of something a man has the power to destroy!

He roasteth roast. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads, “upon his charcoal he sits.”

17. *Deliver me.* The wood could not have delivered itself from the fire had he chosen to burn it instead of worship it! How foolish of a man who has used most of his wood for fuel to shape one of the leftover sticks into an idol and expect it to have the strength and the intelligence to save his life!

18. *They have not known.* Men who do worship images have little knowledge. Their foolish hearts are dark, and though they profess to be wise they are fools (Rom. 1:21–23).

Shut their eyes. See on ch. 6:9, 10.

19. *The stock of a tree.* Literally, “the dry wood of a tree.” He who worships an idol merely pays reverence to a block of wood. He talks to it and bows down before it, little thinking that it would be as sensible to make his requests to a staff or a doorpost.

20. *He feedeth on ashes.* How foolish a man would be to make a meal of ashes, expecting nourishment from them. It is equally foolish to think that an idol can benefit man.

21. Remember these. God calls Israel to heed what He has said about the folly of worshipping idols. Israel belongs to God; they are to serve Him.

22. As a thick cloud. As sun and wind disperse clouds, so God sweeps away the transgressions of His people.

23. Sing, O ye heavens. The “heavens” and the “lower parts of the earth” are figurative for all the world (see on ch. 40:22). Not only Israel, but all the earth, is to rejoice in the knowledge of God’s love and grace.

24. That maketh all things. See on ch. 40:12, 22, 26, 28.

The heavens. See on chs. 34:4; 40:22.

25. Tokens. Heb. *’othoth*, “signs,” “tokens,” “omens.” This refers to the signs given by the pagan wise men to substantiate their claims. God would confound the wisdom of these pagans and prove their words untrue.

Mad. Not insane, but foolish. As their predictions come to nought they will stand exposed as the fools that they are.

26. Confirmeth the word. As God reveals the folly of false prophets, so He establishes the reliability of true prophets. Their predictions are fulfilled (see on Jer. 28:9).

His servant. In this case, probably the prophet Isaiah (see on ch. 41:8).

Thou shalt be inhabited. A century and more before Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar and its people carried into captivity, God foretold its restoration. This is a most remarkable prediction, in striking contrast with the prophecy concerning the city of Babylon, that eventually it would be as completely desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah, and never again be inhabited (see ch. 13:19, 20).

27. The deep. Heb. *šulah*, “[ocean or river] depth.” This is the only use of the word in the OT. This prediction was fulfilled when Cyrus turned the waters of the Euphrates out of their course in order that his soldiers might enter Babylon. Jeremiah made similar predictions concerning the fall of Babylon, comparing it to the drying up of the river Euphrates (see on Jer. 50:38; 51:36; cf. Rev. 16:12).

28. Cyrus. This is a remarkable prophecy in that it mentions Cyrus by name, a century and a half before his time, and foretells the remarkable part he was to play in the liberation of the Jews (for a similar advance prophecy given concerning Josiah’s reform see 1 Kings 13:2). Cyrus must have been greatly astonished to learn that a Jewish prophecy named him, described his capture of Babylon, and predicted his policy toward the captive Jews, a century and a half before his birth (see PK 557).

My shepherd. In overthrowing Babylon and liberating the Jews, Cyrus did for literal Israel what Christ will accomplish for all His chosen ones in the overthrow of mystical Babylon and the deliverance of His people from her dominion (Rev. 18:2–4, 20; Rev. 19:1, 2).

Thou shalt be built. Soon after capturing Babylon, Cyrus issued the decree that permitted the captive Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the Temple (2 Chron. 36:22, 23; see on Ezra 1:1–4).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2,3 MH 124

3 DA 47; PP 413; SC 95; 5T 729

4, 5 PK 371

20 PK 376
21, 22 PK 321
21–23TM 480
22 COL 204, 205; CT 242; MH 123; PK 320; SC 53
23 MH 33
24 PK 315
28 PK 552

CHAPTER 45

1 *God calleth Cyrus for his church's sake. 5 By his omnipotency he challengeth obedience.*
20 *He convinceth the idols of vanity by his saving power.*

1. To his anointed, to Cyrus. The thought of ch. 44 continues without a break (see ch. 44:28). The title “anointed,” Heb. *mashiach* (Messiah), was applied by the Hebrews to both the high priest (Ex. 30:30) and the king (1 Sam. 24:6). See on Ps. 2:2. Christ (Gr. *Christos*, “anointed”) was anointed by the Holy Ghost for His work in behalf of fallen man (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; see on Matt. 1:1). Ancient writers speak of Cyrus as a man of singular nobility and uprightness of character.

The gates. The Greek historian Herodotus relates that on the night of Cyrus’ capture of Babylon the city gates along the Euphrates were not closed. A festival was in progress, and people were to be permitted to cross the river at will.

2. Crooked places straight. The LXX and Dead Sea scroll 1QIs read “level the mountains.” See on ch. 40:3, 4. The Lord would prepare the way for Cyrus to perform His work. The language of the verse is figurative.

3. The treasures. Cyrus came into possession of vast hoards of treasure when he took Sardis in Asia Minor, capital of Croesus, the fabulously wealthy king of Lydia, and again when he captured Babylon. In his success Cyrus was to recognize the hand of the Lord.

4. For Jacob. It was God’s will that the Jews return to their land after 70 years, but Babylon was evidently unwilling to release them. God therefore raised up the Persians and made Cyrus His chosen instrument for the liberation of the Jews.

5. There is none else. Cyrus lived in a land where few, if any, recognized the Lord. But God ordained the course of events so that Cyrus would have an opportunity to recognize Him as the Supreme Ruler and as the One who had appointed him his mission (see on Ezra 1:2).

6. That they may know. Through the influence of Cyrus men everywhere would hear of the Lord, who had appointed him.

7. I form the light. It was about the time of Cyrus, or soon thereafter, that Zoroastrianism became the religion of Persia. Its great deity was Ahura-Mazda, the god of light and life, who was in constant conflict with the wicked hosts of darkness under Ahriman. God made known to Cyrus, and through him to the world, that He was the world’s Creator, the true God of light.

Peace. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “good.”

Evil. Heb. *ra’*, which may mean either moral evil that springs from within or trouble that comes upon one from without. Here it is used in the latter sense (see Isa. 47:11; Amos 3:6). God is the author of “light” and “peace.” He permits “evil,” whether moral or material, that men and angels may witness the result of a departure from the eternal

principles of right (see on Dan. 4:17). In Scripture God is often represented as causing that which He does not prevent (see on 2 Chron. 18:18).

8. Drop down. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “burst asunder.”

Pour down righteousness. Isaiah pictures righteousness descending from heaven as a gentle rain, bringing life and refreshment to the barren earth (see Ps. 72:6; Hosea 6:3; Joel 2:23).

Let the earth open. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads, for this clause and the next, “the one saying to the earth, Bud forth with salvation.” This scroll lacks “together; I the Lord have created it.”

9. Striveth with his Maker. The context clearly addresses this warning to Cyrus. God has called him to the performance of a specific task, and it can be well with him only if he cooperates with the divine plan.

Shall the clay say? Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads, “Woe to the one saying,” etc.

Or thy work, He hath no hands. Literally, “or your work no hands to it?” Cyrus, here represented by a piece of pottery, was not to complain because of the role God ordained for him. God had raised him up for a particular purpose, and except for the guiding hand of God he would never have become the great leader that he was. Inasmuch as God had made him what he was for a particular purpose, Cyrus was obligated to fulfill his appointed mission.

10. What begettest thou? Cyrus was not to be resentful or rebellious against the role marked out for him. It is interesting to imagine the reaction of Cyrus to the counsel here given, if these words of Isaiah were read to him by Daniel (see PK 557).

11. Ask me of things to come. The Targums have this as a question, “Will you ask?” etc. A stranger has no right to interfere with the way a man orders his household, and in the same way it is inappropriate for Cyrus to question the dealings of God with His people Israel. He is under no obligation to give men an account of the reasons for His deeds. What He does is for their best good, and that is all they need to know.

Command ye me. The last part of the verse should be in the form of a question: “Will you command me concerning the work of thy hands?” Otherwise, v. 11 contradicts the statements of vs. 9, 10. Cyrus was to accept the directions God gave him, not to attempt to carry out his own desires where these were in conflict with the divine will. For the principles involved in God’s dealings with Cyrus, see on Ex. 9:16; Dan. 4:17.

12. Created man upon it. God created both the world and its inhabitants, and must have had a beneficent purpose for so doing. Cyrus may not understand the divine purposes, but that is no excuse for a failure to carry out the role assigned him (see v. 13).

Stretched out the heavens. That, is, the atmospheric heavens. See on ch. 40:12.

13. I have raised him up. That is, Cyrus (see on chs. 44:28; 45:1). Heretofore (in vs. 1–12) God has been addressing Cyrus directly, in the second person. Now, as He turns to speak to His own people of His purpose in their return to Judea, He refers to Cyrus in the third person.

Let go my captives. This is the purpose for which Cyrus was exalted by God (see on Ezra 1:1–4).

14. The labour of Egypt. That is, the products of labor, the wealth. God now addresses His own people, in anticipation of their return from captivity (see on v. 13). As vs. 1–12 outline the will of God for Cyrus, so vs. 13–25 constitute a statement of God’s purpose in restoring the Jews to their homeland.

Come over unto thee. Not only were the Jews to be restored to their own land; they were intended to become a great nation, honored by all the other nations of earth. For the role of Israel upon the return from Babylonian captivity, see pp. 29–32; see also Ps. 68:31; 72:10; Isa. 60:1–11.

15. *That hidest thyself.* Although the ways of God are not always apparent to men—He may at times seem to hide Himself from them—He will in due time manifest Himself in mercy and blessing.

17. *Israel shall be saved.* It was God’s purpose that, upon the return from Babylon, Israel should be loyal to Him, thus making possible the fulfillment of all the glorious promises of old (see pp. 29–32). In course of time, however, Israel again forsook the Lord, forfeited His blessing, and was replaced in the divine plan by the Christian church (see pp. 35, 36). Accordingly, all the promises made to literal Israel belong to the church. So, Paul states, “All Israel shall be saved,” and he defines Israel as the church (see on Rom. 11:26).

World without end. That is, “forever and ever.”

18. *To be inhabited.* See on v. 12. The earth was not created “in vain” (Heb. *tohu*; see on Gen. 1:2). It was designed to be the home of man. Regardless of what may be the purpose of the enemy and what ruin he may accomplish by sin, God’s original plan will at length be carried out. Creation was a purposeful act, not merely an end in itself. Sin has postponed the realization of that purpose, but though postponed for a time it will ultimately be achieved. God’s infinite purposes know no haste and no delay (see DA 32).

19. *I said not.* Not only was creation a purposeful act (see on v. 18); God’s choice of Israel was also. As God raised up Cyrus, not simply that he might become a great ruler, but that he might play a part in the divine plan, so God had raised up Israel—and was now releasing them from captivity—that His eternal purpose might be realized through them (see on Ex. 9:16; Dan. 4:17).

20. *Escaped of the nations.* The Jews, freed by Cyrus to return to their homes, were to gather together and thank God for deliverance, acknowledging the evidences of His love and His power. They were to acknowledge, also, the folly of idolatry. History reveals the fact that the Babylonian captivity effectively cured the Jews of idolatry, even though only a relatively small number of them went back to Palestine.

21. *Tell ye.* This challenge is addressed to those who worship idols. Let them, if they can, set forth convincing proof of their divinity (see on chs. 41:22, 23; 43:9; 44:7).

A just God and a Saviour. Justice and mercy are the principles that determine all of God’s dealings with men. Satan charged that these qualities are incompatible, and that God is not merciful to His creatures in the exercise of divine justice, nor was He just in His exercise of mercy. The plan of salvation was designed to prove this charge false. (see on Ps. 85:10).

22. *Look unto me.* See on Isa. 56:7; cf. Num. 21:9; John 3:14.

There is none else. See on Acts 4:12; cf. John 6:68.

23. *Every knee shall bow.* All will eventually acknowledge God’s justice and mercy (see on v. 21). For the fulfillment of these words, see on Rom. 14:11 Phil. 2:10, 11; Rev. 5:13; cf. Rev. 15:3; 19:1–6.

24. *In the Lord.* No man can be righteous without Christ, for of ourselves we have no righteousness (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 7:18). For a righteousness character we are wholly and completely dependent upon Him (see on Rom. 8:1–4; Gal. 2:20).

25. *Be justified.* To be justified means to be acquitted, or pronounced innocent (see on Rom. 5:1). It was to make this experience possible for us that Christ died.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–25CT 455

1–3PK 551

4–6PK 557

5 Ed 174; MB 121; PK 502; 5T 754

7 PK 315

7–12MH 414

8 MB 21

12 PK 315

13 PK 552, 557

17 MB 152; PK 732

18 GC 437, 674; PP 67

19 TM 520

21–25TM 480

22 DA 283; FE 441; MB 152; MH 124; PK 375; TM 520; 5T 634

23 GC 670

24 PK 175

24, 25 MB 9

CHAPTER 46

1 *The idols of Babylon could not save themselves. 3 God saveth his people to the end. 5 Idols are not comparable to God for power, 12 or present salvation.*

1. *Bel boweth down.* In chs. 40:19, 20; 41:23, 24; 44:9–20; 45:16 Isaiah has pointed out the folly of worshiping idols; here he speaks specifically of the gods of Babylon. Bel, meaning “lord,” was the title applied to Marduk, the patron god of Babylon (Jer. 50:2; 51:44). During the annual New Year festivities Babylonian kings “took the hands of Marduk” and received confirmation of the kingship for the ensuing year. The same practice was followed by the kings of Assyria when they became rulers of Babylon (see Vol. II, p. 61). The name Bel appears in the names Belteshazzar (Dan. 1:7) and Belshazzar (Dan. 5:1).

Nebo. Or, Nabu, the Babylonian god of knowledge and literature. His seat of worship was at Borsippa, near Babylon. He attained a position second only to Marduk, and was regarded as his son. Nabu did homage to his father by making an annual visit to Babylon, during the New Year celebration (see below). In return, Marduk accompanied Nabu part of the way back to Borsippa. The name of Nabu appears in the names Nebuchadnezzar (see on Dan. 1:1) and Nabopolassar.

Upon the beasts. On the journeys aforementioned Bel and Nebo were carried by men or on the backs of animals. In contrast, Israel’s God has carried and delivered His people (v. 3). Whereas Bel and Nebo required the help of their devotees, the true God was the helper of those who worshipped Him.

2. *Gone into captivity.* When Sennacherib destroyed the city of Babylon in 689 B.C. he carried away the statue of Marduk to Ashur as one of the spoils of war (see Vol. II, pp. 64, 65). There this idol remained till the reign of Ashurbanipal, when it was restored to Babylon. Isaiah graphically portrays the utter helplessness of the greatest of the Babylonian gods.

3. Borne by me. See on Isa. 46:1; cf. Deut. 1:31; Isa. 63:9.

4. Even to your old age. The Lord would never cease to care for His own. So long as life endures He will watch over them as loving parents watch over their children.

5. To whom will ye liken me? Isaiah repeatedly asks this questions (see on ch. 40:18, 25).

6. He maketh it a god. See on chs. 40:19, 20; 41:7 cf. ch. 44:9–17. When men know God and yet refuse to honor Him their foolish hearts grow dark, and “professing themselves to be wise” they become fools.

7. They bear him. See on v. 1.

Not answer. See on ch. 44:9; see Ps. 115:5. Wood or gold when fashioned in the form of an idol is still only inanimate material, unable to hear the cry of a human soul. In hours of desperate need men look for a God who can hear the cry of their hearts and who can supply their needs (see Ps. 107:9). Idols leave only an aching void in the souls of the men who worship them.

8. Remember this. From the earliest times God had warned Israel of the evils of transgression (Deut. 28:14–68; 32:37–41), yet they failed to take heed (Isa. 6:9, 10). Now, Isaiah reiterated the same message (chs. 1:2, 4, 5, 21–23; 43:27; 58:1; 59:13) in the hope of saving the nation from disaster.

On the danger of forgetting God, see Deut. 6:12; 8:11; Rom. 1:21–23; see on Ex. 20:8. “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history” (LS 196).

10. Declaring the end. See on ch. 41:4, 22; cf. chs. 44:7; 45:21.

My counsel shall stand. Isaiah repeatedly set forth this argument of God’s supreme authority and power (see on ch. 14:24; cf. chs. 14:26, 27; 43:13). History is not a mere matter of chance (see on Dan. 4:17). God has a purpose for the world, and that purpose will prevail (see on Isa. 45:18, 19).

11. A ravenous bird from the east. This expression is figurative of Cyrus (see on chs. 41:2; 44:28; 45:1). Cyrus was a “shepherd” to the scattered flock of Israel, but a ravenous bird of prey to Babylon, the enemy of God’s people.

12. Ye stouthearted. Literally, “strong of heart” (see on Ex. 4:21). The professed people of God had shown themselves to be obdurate and self-willed. They would listen neither to God nor to reason. Stubbornness is the archenemy of righteousness, whereas meekness is akin to godliness (see on Matt. 5:5).

13. Bring near my righteousness. That is, God would one day deliver His people from Babylon, through Cyrus (ch. 45:13). The deliverance from Babylon is a type of the greater deliverance from sin accomplished through Christ.

Not tarry. The Babylonian captivity was to be for a period of 70 years (Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10), at the close of which the Jews were to return to their homeland under Cyrus’ decree (2 Chron. 36:21–23; Ezra 1:1–4). Toward the close of the 70 years the Lord revealed to Daniel the prophecy of restoration and the coming of Messiah (Dan. 9:2, 24, 25). The prophets often refer to the coming of Messiah as the climax of the work of restoration that began with the return from captivity (see Zech. 6:11–13; etc.). Had Israel proved faithful, the history of the plan of salvation would have soon reached its grand climax (see pp. 29, 30).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 9 ML 293
- 9, 10 GC 344; 5T 698
- 10 GC 393; MB 100; ML 10; 7T 298
- 13 PK 696

CHAPTER 47

1 *God’s judgment upon Babylon and Chaldea, 6 for their unmercifulness, 7 pride, 10 and overboldness, 11 shall be irresistible.*

1. *Virgin daughter.* Compare “virgin, the daughter of Zion” (Isa. 37:22), “of Egypt” (Jer. 46:11). In contrast, Babylon was a harlot (cf. Rev. 17:1, 5). The prostitutes connected with ancient Oriental temples were often spoken of as “sacred virgins,” but they were neither virgin nor holy. Babylon boasted of her religion, which outwardly appeared a thing of glory and beauty, but inwardly was an abomination. Compare Rev. 17:4. The prophet here unmasks the “virgin daughter” and reveals her shame. Instead of sitting on a throne she is to take her place where she belongs, in the dust of the earth, a symbol of mourning and desolation (cf. Isa. 3:26).

Careful readers of the book of Revelation have noted the great similarity between much of its symbolism and the language of certain passages in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. It is apparent that John, guided by Inspiration, borrowed extensively from the language of the prophets of old, in order to set forth the future experiences of the church in terms that would be familiar and meaningful to the careful reader of the OT. Oppression by, and the subsequent desolation of, literal Babylon provided John with a pictorial description of the oppression of God’s remnant people by mystical Babylon and of the eventual desolation of the latter. The symbolism and the language of the book of Revelation become more clear and meaningful when studied in the light of what the prophets of old wrote concerning events of their era. Various aspects of the punishment of literal Babylon as set forth in Isa. 47 are thus of value in connection with a study of the punishment of mystical Babylon, presented in Rev. 16 to 19. Note the following:

Isaiah 47	Revelation 16 to 19
1. “Sit in the dust” (v. 1).	1. “Cast dust on their heads” (18:19).
2. “Called tender and delicate” (v. 1).	2. “Lived deliciously” (18:7).
“Given to pleasures . . . dwellest carelessly” (v. 8).	“Things which were dainty and goodly” (18:14).
3. “Take the millstones” (v. 2).	3. ‘Took up a stone like a great millstone” (18:21).
4. “I will take ven-geance” (v. 3).	4. “Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath” (16:19).
	“Reward her even as she rewarded you” (18:6).
	“Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her” (18:8).
	“He hath judged the great whore” (19:2).
5. “The lady of kingdoms” (v. 5).	5. “That great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (17:18).
“I shall be a lady for ever” (v. 7).	“I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow” (18:7).
“I am, and none else be side me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children” (v. 8).	
6. “Thou didst shew them no mercy . . . very heavily laid thy	6. “I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints” (17:6).
	“In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that

yoke" (v. 6).

7. "In a moment in one day" (v. 9).

8. "The multitude of thy sorceries" (v. 9).

9. "Therefore shall evil come upon thee . . . thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly" (v. 11).

10. "The flame" (v. 14).

11. "Thy merchants" (v. 15).

were slain upon the earth" (18:24).

7. "In one day . . . in one hour" (18:8, 10, 17, 19).

8. "The wine of the wrath of her fornication" (18:3).
"By thy sorceries were all nations deceived" (18:23).

9. "Make her desolate and naked . . . eat her flesh" (17:16).
"Her plagues" (18:4, 8).
In the cup which she hath filled to her double . . . torment and sorrow give her . . . death, and mourning, and famine" (18:6-8).

10. "Burn her with fire" (17:16).
"She shall be utterly burned with fire" (18:8).
"The smoke of her burning" (18:9).

11. "The merchants . . . were made rich by her" (18:15).
"Thy merchants were the great men of the earth" (18:23).

See also on Isa. 13; 14; 23; Jer. 25:12; 50:1; Eze. 26:13.

2. Grind meal. Babylon looked upon herself as a lady (Isa. 47:7; cf. Rev. 18:7), but she was to become a slave (cf. Ex. 11:5; Job 31:10). The ornaments and finery with which she bedecked herself would be stripped away, and the unshapely features of a female slave, deformed from years of exacting toil, would be revealed for all to see.

Uncover thy locks. Rather, "uncover the veil," that is, remove it.

Make bare the leg. Literally, "strip the skirt." Assyrian pictures thus depict captive women.

Pass over. The picture is of a group of forlorn slaves, stripped of their garments, going barefoot and naked over a stream on the way to the land of their captivity.

3. I will not meet thee as a man. The meaning of this clause is not clear. The change of one letter in Hebrew would give the reading, "I will not loose a man," that is, of those pictured as going into captivity. God will show no mercy to any Babylonian (see Jer. 50:3, 13, 14, 25, 29, 31, 40; 51:6, 22-24, 62).

5. Sit thou silent. Instead of gaiety and rejoicing there would be the silence of desolation and death (see Jer. 50:12, 13, 39; 51:26, 29, 43, 62).

The lady of kingdoms. See Isa. 47:7; Rev. 18:7.

6. I was wroth. On the past tense referring to the yet future captivity, see Vol. I, p. 27. God permitted Babylon to bring judgment against the sinful people of Judah (see Jer. 5:15; Hab. 1:6), but did not sanction the cruelties Babylon meted out to them. Because of her heartlessness and rapaciousness God would destroy Babylon, the destroyer (Jer. 50:10, 11; 51:25). God dealt with Assyria in a similar manner (Isa. 10:5-15).

7. A lady for ever. In boastful confidence Babylon thought she would always be the chief city and mistress of the world. Rome similarly considered herself the "eternal city." In the last days mystical Babylon would also regard herself a queen destined to "see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7).

Remember the latter end. In her hour of prosperity and glory Babylon failed to consider the result of her evil course and her arrogant pride. Happy are those today who remember that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7), and that paths of wrong are "ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

8. Carelessly. Or, "unsuspectingly," or "in [a false sense of] security."

None else beside me. This claim belongs to God alone (Deut. 4:35, 39; Isa. 44:8; 45:5), but Babylon was soon proudly to arrogate it to herself. Nineveh had made the same boast (Zeph. 2:15).

Not sit as a widow. Compare Rev. 18:7.

9. In their perfection. Or, “abundantly,” or “in full measure.”

Thy sorceries. Babylon’s mystic arts would not save her in her hour of doom. In the last night of Babylon’s history the astrologers and soothsayers were called before Belshazzar, but they were unable even to read the handwriting upon the wall, to say nothing of saving the city from its fate (Dan. 5:7, 26–31). It is by sorcery that mystical Babylon succeeds in deceiving and ensnaring the nations of earth (Rev. 18:23). By the practice of occult magic the Babylonian sorcerers professed to be in touch with the gods, yet when their claims were put to the test they could only make the shameful admission that they possessed no such power (Dan. 2:2, 11).

10. Thy wisdom. See on Dan. 1:4.

Perverted thee. Compare Eze. 28:15–17.

None else. See on v. 8.

11. Not know from whence it riseth. This may also be translated, “[against which] you will know no charms.” God foretold the fall of Babylon a century and a half earlier, indeed before the Neo-Babylonian Empire rose, yet all the wise men of Babylon were surprised when that hour struck (Dan. 5:4–9; cf. Matt. 24:39). Against the decree of Heaven and the might of Cyrus the sorcerers of Babylon had no charms.

12. If so be. Literally, “perhaps.”

Able to profit. More exactly, “able to stand,” “able to endure.” Isaiah’s words are not without a touch of irony. Knowing that Babylon will cling to her sorceries in spite of every warning, Isaiah proposes, with evident irony, that she continue in her folly—perhaps her magic will prove successful after all! Compare Hosea 4:17.

13. Astrologers. Literally, “dividers of the heavens.” Astrology, though not yet well-developed, was important in ancient Babylon. The heavens were carefully studied for portents of coming events. But the labors of Babylonian stargazers were to no purpose. Isaiah challenges the Babylonian wise men to continue with their practice of the occult arts and find out for themselves what advantage it might bring them at the hour of doom the Lord had foretold.

Monthly prognosticators. Literally, “the ones who cause to know [the times of] the new moons,” a branch of the ancient science of astronomy.

14. The fire shall burn them. Not literal fire, since the Persians did not then destroy Babylon (for its gradual ruin, see on ch. 13:19, 20). These counselors would be useless to those who depended on them for security—as useless against the flames of war as stubble consumed by the fire.

15. Thy merchants. Babylon was “a land of traffick” and “a city of merchants” (Eze. 17:4). Mystical Babylon is also closely associated with “the merchants of the earth” (Rev. 18:11–19). Ancient Babylon’s great interest was in material things and in financial gain. The illegitimate use of material blessings ever proves a curse to those who accumulate them (see Deut. 8:10–18; Hosea 2:5–9; Luke 12:13–21; see pp. 32, 33).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

CHAPTER 48

1 *God, to convince the people of their foreknown obstinacy, revealed his prophecies. 9 He saveth them for his own sake. 12 He exhorteth them to obedience, because of his power and providence. 16 He lamenteth their backwardness. 20 He powerfully delivereth his out of Babylon.*

1. Hear ye this. Isaiah addresses the hypocrites in Israel, those who profess to serve God but actually do as they please (see on Matt. 6:2).

The waters of Judah. The Targums read, “the seed of Judah.”

Make mention. Literally, “cause to remember.”

2. The holy city. These renegades profess to be citizens of Zion, but are so only in name (see Isa. 29:13; Jer. 7:4, 9–11; Micah 3:11; Matt. 3:9; 15:8; John 8:33, 39; Rom. 4:1, 2; 9:6). They seek the benefits that accrue from loyalty to God but are unwilling to pay the price of obedience (see on Matt. 7:21–27). They want all the privileges of discipleship but refuse to shoulder its responsibilities.

3. I have declared. See on chs. 41:4, 23; 42:9. Not the heathen, but the faithless people of Judah are now called to recognize the foreknowledge of God.

Suddenly. Or, unexpectedly. God had foretold these events, but to the faithless hypocrites what happened came as a complete surprise (see Matt. 24:39). For similar counsel to those who await the coming of the Lord, see 1 Thess. 5:1–8.

4. Obstinate. When God called Israel He already knew what they would be like. The warnings against transgression were given because the Lord knew the dangers that faced them and how easy it would be for them to fall into temptation (see on Deut. 9:6; cf. on Ex. 4:21).

5. Mine idol. Israel had scarcely left Egypt when they ascribed their deliverance to an idol (Ex. 32:4). At the time of the captivity of 586 B.C. Jeremiah also chided Israel for their obduracy of heart (Jer. 44).

6. Thou hast heard. That which the Lord foretold has come true, and they have seen it with their own eyes. Will they not frankly admit His foreknowledge?

New things. Now the Lord reveals further information about events yet to occur. Neither men nor their idols could take credit for having predicted these things.

8. Very treacherously. See on v. 1. God well knew the perverse character of the people of Israel. He knew that they did not want to believe and that, to the end, they would justify themselves in their rebellion. Accordingly, He now presents a most unusual set of predictions, including their coming captivity, the mission of Cyrus, a century and a half before his time, the deliverance from Babylon, and other events culminating in the coming of Messiah.

A transgressor. Or, “a rebel” (Deut. 29:4; 31:27).

9. For my name’s sake. Because of their perversity (see on vs. 1, 2) the people of Judah deserved no further mercy or favor from God. But their fall would bring reproach upon His holy name, for men would think Him capricious, vindictive, and unable to carry into execution His own plans and purposes. The name of God stood for His character—a God who was “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Ex. 34:6). For this reason God would continue to manifest kindness and mercy toward them in spite of their obstinacy. They were His people, and His plan for the salvation of the world was, in ancient times, linked with them (see pp. 26–30).

10. Not with silver. Preferably, “after the manner of silver,” or “like silver.” Israel was not to be refined with such intense heat as is needed for the purification of silver, for then she would have been utterly consumed. Israel was to be corrected only “in measure” (Jer. 30:11; Hosea 11:9), that is, only to the extent necessary to consume her filthiness and dross (see Eze. 22:15–22).

Chosen thee. Or, “proved thee,” or “tried thee” (see Mal. 3:2, 3).

11. For mine own sake. See on v. 9. If the Lord had failed to redeem Israel, His name would have been desecrated among the heathen. God will restore Israel, not because of their merits, but because of His mercy—that His name may be glorified.

12. My called. In vs. 1, 2 Israel was addressed as a people who bore the name of the Lord in hypocrisy rather than in sincerity. Now God reminds them of their original call to be His people (see Deut. 7:6–16; 10:15; 14:2; Ps. 135:4; Isa. 41:8; Isa. 43:1; Isa. 44:1, 2). By reminding them of His love, God sought to woo them back to Himself (see Eze. 16:1–14; Hosea 11:1–8).

I am the first. See Isa. 41:4; cf. Rev. 1:5, 8, 17; 22:13. It was both an honor and a responsibility to be chosen by God as Israel had been.

13. Laid the foundation. See on ch. 40:12, 26, 28. The God who called the universe into being is the same God who called Israel to nationhood and gave to them the status of His chosen representative on earth (see pp. 26, 27).

14. Assemble yourselves. Once more God addresses those who have paid homage to idols (see on v. 5).

The Lord hath loved him. Whether this refers to Cyrus (cf. vs. 14, 15 with chs. 44:26 to 45:4) or to Israel (cf. chs. 45:4; 48:12, 13), the words are appropriate to either.

15. I have called him. See on v. 14. Both Cyrus (ch. 4:1–4) and Israel (chs. 43:1; 48:10) were called of God.

16. Come ye near unto me. That is, to the Lord. God invites the close attention of the people to what He is about to say.

Not spoken in secret. See vs. 3–7.

Hath sent me. According to the context the speaker appears to be Christ. It was God who sent Jesus on His mission. Jesus had been present with the Father from the beginning (John 1:1–3), but when the Father had a work for Him in this world of sin He left heaven to go on His mission (John 1:14; 3:34; 6:29, 57; 17:3, 4). When Jesus entered the world as the Messiah, God sent the Holy Spirit to rest upon Him (Isa. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1–3; Matt. 3:16; Luke 4:18–21; John 1:32, 33; Acts 10:38). The three members of the Godhead are here referred to (see on Isa. 42:1).

17. Teacheth thee to profit. That is, “teaches you what is for your own good.” Christ came to teach men the secrets of peace and blessing (Matt. 6:33; 16:24–26; John 6:33; John 10:9, 10; 17:3) and to guide them in the way of life eternal (John 10:9; 14:6; Heb. 10:20).

18. My commandments. God’s commandments were given to guide men in ways of peace and righteousness (Ps. 119:1, 2, 6, 9, 165; Prov. 3:1, 2). All of God’s laws are for the good of man, to direct him in the way of right and to protect him from sin and suffering.

19. As the sand. See Gen. 22:17; 32:12. Obedience would result in an abundant posterity; disobedience would bring extinction (Isa. 1:19, 20).

20. Go ye forth. This is in anticipation of the time when God would call His people forth from Babylon to avoid its fate (Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 45). In the last days the same urgent call is sent to God's people yet in mystical Babylon (Rev. 18:4).

21. They thirsted not. This was the experience of Israel on the way from Egypt to the Promised Land (Ex. 17:6; Ps. 105:41). For the figurative application of these words, see on Isa. 41:17–19; 43:19, 20; John 4:10, 14.

22. There is no peace. Compare ch. 57:20, 21. The earnest exhortations and reproofs of this chapter (vs. 1, 4, 8, 10, 17, 18) are climaxed by this blunt statement concerning the tragic results of transgression. Peace is the inevitable result of righteousness (see on ch. 32:17), and is utterly impossible for those who walk in ways of evil. In v. 18 peace is associated with obedience to God's commandments. However earnestly men may search for peace they cannot secure it except on God's terms.

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- 9 PK 319
- 10 AA 574, 576; LS 148; MB 31; MH 471; ML 92; PK 584; PP 129, 267; 2T 97; 3T 67; 5T 469, 474, 485; 7T 214
- 11 PK 319
- 13 MH 414
- 17, 18 CW 120
- 18 DA 331; GC 285; LS 25; 4T 284
- 21 PP 411
- 22 GC 285; 2T 289; 4T 185

CHAPTER 49

8

- 1 *Christ, being sent to the Jews, complaineth of them. 5 He is sent to the Gentiles with gracious promises. 13 God's love is perpetual to his church. 18 The ample restoration of the church. 24 The powerful deliverance out of captivity.*

1. Listen, O isles. Isaiah addresses the “coastlands,” or Gentile nations bordering on the Mediterranean. This verse begins an important section of the book of Isaiah (chs. 49–53) in which the “servant” of the Lord is primarily Christ (see on ch. 41:8). The theme of this section is the glorious mission of God's “servant” and His ministry in this world. Israel is to be restored and the Gentiles are to be gathered in. For a comprehensive discussion of the role of Israel in the proclamation of the gospel, see pp. 26–32.

Called me from the womb. From the moment of conception Christ was set apart for one purpose, to bring salvation to men (Matt. 1:20, 21). The prophetic picture of Messiah and His work is unsurpassed.

2. Like a sharp sword. That is, Messiah's message would be effective. The sword is a fitting symbol of the cutting, penetrating power of the Word of God (see Hosea 6:5; Eph. 6:17; 2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16; 19:15, 21).

Shaft. Literally, “arrow,” another symbol for the swift, piercing power of Christ's words.

⁸Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 41:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

In his quiver. Christ was kept by God till the hour of His mission had fully come (Mark 1:15; Gal. 4:4). With the arrival of the time foretold by Daniel (see on Dan. 9:25; Mark 1:5), Christ came into the world and swiftly accomplished His mission.

3. My servant, O Israel. See on ch. 41:8.

4. I have laboured in vain. Israel, addressed in v. 3, now replies. Misfortune discouraged the faithful in Israel, and the culmination yet to come in the Babylonian captivity would make them feel that it was futile to hope longer for the glorious destiny promised Israel (see pp. 29–32). It would seem that the days were prolonged and that every vision had failed (see Eze. 12:22–28). In a similar way it was also true that Christ, at times, felt keenly disappointed that His ministry for men was so little appreciated.

5. And now. Messiah is again the speaker.

Though Israel be not gathered. Reading *lo*, “to him,” rather than *lo’*, “not,” nine Hebrew manuscripts, the Targums (marginal reading), and Dead Sea scroll 1QIs render this clause, “and Israel shall be gathered to him.” Christ came to bring Israel back again to God (see Eze. 34:11–16; Matt. 15:24).

6. A light to the Gentiles. Though Messiah came as a Shepherd to gather together the lost sheep of Israel (see on v. 5), He had “other sheep ... not of this fold” (John 10:16). He came to be the Saviour, not alone of Israel, but of the world (John 3:16). National barriers were to be broken down (Eph. 2:14) and His message of hope was to go to the ends of the earth (Matt. 24:14). For a comprehensive discussion of Israel’s mission to the world see pp. 25–38.

7. Kings shall see. Compare ch. 52:15. Messiah was to come as a “servant” (chs. 49:5; 52:13; see on ch. 41:8), and to be despised by men (chs. 52:14; 53:2, 3), but the hour would come when the most honored men of earth would fall on their knees before Him and do Him homage (see Ps. 72:10, 11; see on Isa. 45:23; 52:13–15; see also pp. 28–30). No man was ever more hated than He, and none more loved. Because He humbled Himself He was given “a name which is above every name,” that before Him “every knee should bow” (Phil. 2:8–10).

8. In an acceptable time. Literally, “in a time of [divine] favor,” here referring to the life and ministry of Christ (see Isa. 61:2; cf. Luke 4:19). Christ came into the world to mediate the new covenant between God and man (see Jer. 31:31–34; Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:6–13).

The desolate heritages. A figurative expression. Messiah would bring to His people a realization of all the promises made to the fathers. They were to become “joint-heirs” with Him (Rom. 8:17; cf. Gal. 3:29; Eph. 3:6; Heb. 1:14). The earth had become spiritually desolate and barren as a result of sin (see DA 36, 37), but when the time came God sent His Son into the world (Gal. 4:4), and through Him poured “upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled” (DA 37). The coming of the Messiah ushered in that “acceptable year of the Lord” that was destined to “raise up the former desolations” and to “repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations” (Isa. 61:1–4; cf. Luke 4:18, 19).

9. Say to the prisoners. For comment see on ch. 42:7.

In darkness. That is, the darkness of ignorance and sin. Christ came to earth as the Light of the world, to lead men out of darkness into the glorious, saving light of His gospel (John 1:4, 5, 9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35, 36, 46; 1 Peter 2:9).

10. Shall not hunger. The picture is that of a flock cared for by a kindly shepherd, lacking neither pasture nor water (see Ps. 23; John 10:11, 14).

Heat. That is, “parching heat,” as of a dry wind off the desert.

11. Highways. These “highways” were to serve for the proclamation of the gospel to all nations, and for men to journey to Jerusalem to worship the true God (see on chs. 11:16; 35:8; 40:3; 62:10; see pp. 28, 29).

12. From far. From all lands the exiles of Israel would return to their homeland, and from the ends of the earth men would come to the true light (see on v. 11; see ch. 56:6–8).

Sinim. A land apparently to either the south or the east of Judah, as the north and west have already been mentioned, and probably very distant. Of the various attempts made to identify the “land of Sinim,” none are conclusive. The traditional interpretation, that it refers to China, is based on a supposed similarity between the Heb. *Sinim*, “Sinim,” and *Ch’in*, a dynasty that ruled China during the latter part of the 3d century B.C. In very early times China had commercial contacts with countries to the west. Porcelain with Chinese inscriptions has been found at ancient Thebes in Egypt. Persian Jews seem also to have had dealings with silk merchants from China. There is, however, no evidence for the use of either *Sinim* or *Ch’in* as a designation for China until centuries after the time of Isaiah. Because of this lack of historical evidence for China as the land designated, some scholars have suggested the reading *Sewen[im]*, or Syene (*Aswân*) in Upper Egypt. Aramaic usage tends to confirm this suggestion. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads *Sewenyyim*, which also apparently favors the identification with Syene. The LXX reads “Persia.” Other proposed identifications are Sinai, in the Wilderness of Sin (Ex. 16:1), Phoenicia, and the northern Arabian Desert.

13. Sing, O heavens. See on ch. 44:23; cf. Ps. 96:11, 12.

Comforted his people. See on vs. 14, 15; ch. 40:1.

14. But Zion said. God had great plans for His people, but they thought He had forgotten them (see on Isa. 40:27; 54:6, 7; cf. Ps. 137:1–4).

15. Can a woman? The strongest love known to human beings is that of a mother for her child, and this love Isaiah uses to illustrate the love of God for His people.

16. Graven thee. Or, “inscribed thee,” or “engraved thee.” Israel feared that God had forgotten the covenant promises made to the fathers (see on v. 14). The state of Israel in Isaiah’s time may seem to imply such forgetfulness. But Isaiah declares that they have no conception of the depth and enduring quality of His love for them as a people (see Deut. 7:7, 8). Throughout eternity the nailprints in the hands of Christ will be a perpetual reminder of His love for sinners (see John 15:13).

Thy walls. That is, the walls of Zion, symbolic of the strength and welfare of the nation.

17. Thy children. That is, the Jews of the Exile, who would return to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem after the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:10).

Thy destroyers. The Assyrians, and, more specifically, the Babylonians. The destroyers of Jerusalem would themselves be destroyed.

18. All these. That is, the returning exiles (see ch. 60:4, 5), who, together with Gentile proselytes, would once more rear the walls of Zion (ch. 60:3, 4, 10; see pp. 28, 29).

Clothe thee with them. Zion is represented as covered with her inhabitants like a bride arrayed in her finery. The returning exiles and the proselytes would be to her as an ornament of grace and beauty (see Isa. 62:3; Mal. 3:17).

19. Too narrow. Judah would be restored and repopulated. If the restored nation had been faithful, the increase in population would have made the original territory far too small (see Isa. 54:2, 3; Zech. 10:10).

Swallowed thee up. See v. 17.

20. The children. The first two clauses of v. 20 are from two Hebrew words meaning, literally, “the children of your bereavement,” that is, “the children born in the time of your bereavement” (RSV). Zion had lost her sons and daughters, and had been put away by her husband, Jehovah; nevertheless, she would again have children (see ch. 54:1).

21. Who hath begotten? Zion, thinking herself forsaken and desolate (see on v. 14), is overwhelmed at her latter state (see ch. 54:1).

A captive. In anticipation of the Babylonian captivity, Isaiah looks forward by inspiration and hears captive Israel speak of the experience that was to come to her by “the rivers of Babylon” (Ps. 137:1).

22. The Gentiles. The nations would assist in the return of the Jews to their homeland and in the restoration of Zion after the Captivity (see on Ezra 7:15; 8:25–27; see pp. 29–32).

23. Nursing fathers. That is, “foster fathers.” The rulers of earth would assist in the return of the Jews from Babylon and the restoration of Zion.

24. Shall the prey? A rhetorical question, the answer to which is provided in vs. 25, 26.

The lawful captive. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “the captives of the despot [or, “tyrant”],” which seems to accord more closely with the context.

25. The captives. First of all, the Hebrew captives, those who had been carried off by the Assyrians, and those who were to be taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and then, figuratively, all who have been held captive by Satan.

I will save. The answer is emphatic—God can save and will save. His people have nothing to fear. They are not to focus their attention on the strength of those who oppress them, but on the might of their Great Deliverer.

Thy children. That is, Zion’s children (see vs. 14–22). Here Isaiah refers specifically to the Hebrew exiles scattered in foreign lands. In common Hebrew usage “children,” literally, “sons,” is synonymous with “descendants.” Isaiah is not speaking particularly of “children” in the sense the English word commonly conveys (2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15; Ps. 149:2; etc.). Those who oppose God and His people will turn against one another (Eze. 38:21; Zech. 14:13), and thus destroy themselves. It is the privilege of parents today to claim for their children the promise here made to ancient Israel, for our little ones are objects of divine love.

26. All flesh shall know. See on ch. 45:23.

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2–67T 191

4, 5 DA 678

6 DA 63, 465; PK 373; 8T 57

6–10PK 689

7 COL 163; DA 678

8, 9 MH 107; PK 373
 8–10DA 679
 8–11AA 10
 10 MB 17
 12 PK 374
 13–16AA 11
 14–16GC 626; MB 133; MH 250
 15 FE 153; GC 32; ML 297; SC 54; SL 93; 4T 329; 5T 633
 15, 16 5T 230
 16 DA 479; Ev 414; FE 273; GC 484; PK 571, 589; TM 357; 5T 474; 9T 189
 24 MYP 51
 24, 25 DA 259; MH 93, 161; PK 378
 25 AH 317; ML 21, 352

CHAPTER 50

1 *Christ sheweth that the dereliction of the Jews is not to be imputed to him, by his ability to save, 5 by his obedience in that work, 7 and by his confidence in that assistance. 10 An exhortation to trust in God, and not in ourselves.*

1. Your mother's divorcement. The mother is Judah, the children are the Jews, and the father is God. There was no certificate of divorce, for God had not divorced Judah (see Deut. 24:1–4)—she had forsaken Him. Compare the acted parable of Hosea, a contemporary of Isaiah (Hosea 1 to 3; cf. Eze. 16:8, 15). God had never relinquished His rights as Judah's lawful spouse, and sought by every means possible to persuade her to return. Compare the experience of Hosea with Gomer as recorded in Hosea 2.

My creditors. The figure changes. Judah, in the Babylonian captivity, would find herself a slave, and would conclude that her Master must have sold her to satisfy the demands of His creditors (see Lev. 25:39; Deut. 15:12). But God has no creditors. By their evil ways the Jews sold themselves and became the servants of sin (Isa. 52:3; cf. Rom. 6:16). This was the reason for their bondage to the heathen.

2. Is my hand shortened? Was Judah's subjection to the heathen due to inability on God's part to redeem her? No! He had redeemed Israel from Egypt, had saved them from Assyria, and would yet redeem them from Babylon.

Their fish stinketh. An allusion to the first of the ten devastating plagues of Egypt (Ex. 7:17–21).

3. Blackness. An allusion to the ninth plague of Egypt (Ex. 10:21–23).

4. The learned. Literally, „the learners,” or “the disciples.” This verse introduces a new section. Jesus, the “Servant” (see on ch. 41:8) of Jehovah, here declares His devotion to the task before Him—His earthly mission. He comes as a Teacher of men, yet He is, in turn, instructed by the Father (see John 3:2; John 5:19; John 8:28; DA 208, 417).

That I should know how. Before Christ came to this earth the plan for His life “lay out before Him, perfect in all its details”; nevertheless, living as a man among men, He laid aside His foreknowledge of these things and was guided by the Father's will as it was unfolded to Him day by day (DA 147; see on Luke 2:49). This fact makes even more meaningful the many occasions on which it is recorded that Jesus spent entire nights in prayer (see on Mark 3:13).

To speak a word. The Messiah would come into the world as the living “Word” (John 1:1), or spokesman for God, and His constant mission was to comfort and instruct those

who were weary of sin (Matt. 11:28). See DA 208, 417; COL 139, 336. Apart from the salvation so graciously provided by Christ, the restless hearts of sinful men can never be at peace.

5. *Opened mine ear.* Christ's "ear" was ever ready to hear His Father's bidding (see on v. 4). He never sought to do His own will, but always the will of the Father, who had sent Him (Ps. 40:6, 8; John 5:30; see on Luke 2:49). Even in the bitter extremity of the Garden of Gethsemane He did not refuse the "cup" that was pressed to His trembling lips (Matt. 26:42; Phil. 2:8).

6. *My back.* The prediction of v. 6 was fulfilled in the scourging of Jesus (Mark 15:15).

Plucked off the hair. The NT does not record this of Jesus at His trial. To pluck off the hair was considered by the Jews an extreme insult (see Ezra 9:3; Neh. 13:25). Instead of *lemortim*, "to them that plucked off the hair," Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads *lemotlim*, "to them that slap." This is also the reading of the LXX.

My face. See Mark 14:65; 15:19.

7. *Like a flint.* A figure denoting firm determination (Eze. 3:8, 9). For the fulfillment of this prediction in the life of Jesus see on Luke 9:51.

8. *He is near.* As Jesus hung on the cross the Father was near at hand, though Jesus knew it not (see DA 753, 754).

Mine adversary. Satan, "the accuser" (Rev. 12:10; cf. Zech. 3:1), arraigned Christ, but had no valid charge to bring against Him (see John 14:30). Christ was innocent, and knew that His accuser knew it as well. The false charges brought against Jesus revealed the malice of those who brought them.

9. *Will help me.* It was confidence in His Father's love and perfect submission to His will that sustained the Saviour during His last conflict with the powers of darkness. For the confidence we may have in times of stress see Ps. 37:3–20, 32–40.

Wax old. Or, "wear out," that is, perish (see Ps. 102:26).

The moth. Compare Isa. 51:8; see on Matt. 6:19, 20.

10. *Servant.* See on ch. 41:8.

Walketh in darkness. There are times of darkness and perplexity, even for those who set out to follow the voice of the Lord. The enemy presses in to confuse and to discourage. This was the experience of Job, and later of John the Baptist. It is the privilege of all who find themselves in similar circumstances to place unfaltering trust in God. In due time He will give them the light for which they seek.

11. *Sparks.* There is ever the danger that those who profess to serve the Lord may forsake the heavenly pathway for ways of their own devising. In place of light from heaven they turn to light of their own. Like Nadab and Abihu, they offer "strange fire" before the Lord (Lev. 10:1, 2). See on Matt. 6:22, 23.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 DA 620, 709

4 AH 435; COL 139, 336; DA 254; GW 122; MH 158; ML 89, 114, 196; 4T 529; 6T 339; 7T 15, 70, 71, 73, 162; 9T 27, 134

6 AA 225; MB 71

7 MYP 105; 3T 315; 7T 244

7–10 DA 123

10 PK 253; TM 355

10, 11 TM 44, 96; 7T 258; 8T 70

11 Ed 74; FE 193, 194, 258, 259, 265, 331; TM 56, 87, 212, 327, 511; 2T 644; 5T 252, 331, 427; 8T 140; 9T 164

CHAPTER 51

1 *An exhortation, after the pattern of Abraham, to trust in Christ, 3 by reason of his comfortable promises, 4 of his righteous salvation, 7 and man's mortality. 9 Christ by his sanctified arm defendeth his from the fear of man. 17 He bewaileth the afflictions of Jerusalem, 21 and promiseth deliverance.*

1. Hearken to me. Isaiah now addresses the devout in Israel, those who sincerely and earnestly looked for the fulfillment of the promises made to the fathers but who had become discouraged because of their delay and apparent failure (see on chs. 49:4, 14; 50:1). They had forgotten how the Lord had led their fathers in ages past (see LS 196). God now invites them to turn to Him and to forget their doubts and misgivings. For those who seek righteousness and deliverance there is but one way to attain these objectives, and that is by faithful obedience to the voice of the Lord.

Righteousness. Heb. *šedeq*, usually “righteousness,” but also “justice,” “success,” or “deliverance.” He who sows righteousness will reap justice, success, and deliverance. The one is the cause, the other the result. Both shades of meaning may be intended here. The first is emphasized in v. 7, and the second in v. 5. If Israel would only *do* right, they could expect justice, success, and deliverance.

Whence ye are hewn. Israel was to reflect on the way by which God had led the nation in past ages. From a humble beginning they had become a great nation. As stone is taken from the quarry and shaped into a beautiful temple, so the people of Israel had been brought out of Egypt and Mesopotamia and prepared by God to be His living representatives. How marvelously the Lord had worked in their behalf! Now He would have them take courage, in faith believing that He would do so again.

2. Look unto Abraham. God reminds Israel of their origin as a nation (Gen. 11:28, 31; 12:1, 4, 5). Triumphs of the past should inspire courage in the present and hope for the future (see Hosea 1:10).

Blessed him. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads, “I caused him to be fruitful” (see Gen. 17:6; 28:3; 48:4; 49:22).

3. Zion. See on Ps. 48:2; Isa. 40:1.

Like Eden. See Deut. 28:4–6; COL 289.

Melody. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs adds, “And grief and sighing shall flee away.”

4. A law. Heb. *torah*, which includes all the revealed will of God (see on Deut. 31:9; Ps. 19:7). God here promises to continue making His purposes known to Israel (see Amos 3:7).

My judgment. Divine justice will again be established on earth (see on ch. 42:4, 6), and confidence in God's rulership will bring in a spirit of peace and security.

5. My righteousness. That is, “deliverance” (see on v. 1). The deliverance God now promises His people will not be long delayed.

The isles. See on ch. 42:4. The restoration of Israel was to be followed by the ingathering of the Gentile nations (see pp. 28–30).

6. The heavens shall vanish. See on ch. 34:4. In place of this clause and the next, Dead Sea scroll 1QIs has, “And see who created these things” (see ch. 40:26). The hour

is coming when the atmospheric heavens are to “be dissolved” (2 Peter 3:10, 11). Heaven and earth may pass away, but God’s revealed will (see on Isa. 51:4) abides forever (see Matt. 5:18).

For ever. When God restores the earth to its original state it will not again revert to its present state of moral chaos.

7. Know righteousness. Those who “know righteousness” are here defined as having the law of God—a transcript of His character—in their hearts. His revealed will (see on v. 4) is etched upon their minds, and in character they are like Him (see Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; 1 John 3:2, 3).

Fear ye not. See on ch. 41:10, 13.

The reproach of men. See on Matt. 10:28.

8. The moth. See on Matt. 6:19, 20; cf. Isa. 50:9. Sin and sinners will pass away, but righteousness is permanent. Transgression will inevitably bring ruin, but obedience brings life and blessing (Isa. 1:19, 20, 28; John 3:16; Rom. 6:23; see on Matt. 7:21–28).

My righteousness. See on vs. 1, 6.

9. In the ancient days. Representing the devout in Israel, Isaiah pleads with God to repeat the great works of deliverance that marked the days of old (see on vs. 1, 2).

Rahab. A poetical term for Egypt (see on Ps. 87:4; Isa. 30:7). As God has delivered His people in ages past, so may He deliver them now!

The dragon. See Rev. 12:7–9; see on Isa. 27:1.

10. It. That is, the “arm” of the Lord (v. 9).

Dried the sea. A reference to the crossing of the Red Sea (see Ex. 14:21; cf. Isa. 43:16).

11. The redeemed. See on ch. 35:10. Isaiah again foretells the return from Babylonian captivity. Similarly, “all Israel” (Rom. 11:26), the spiritual children of Abraham (Gal. 3:29), will be delivered from the tyranny of mystical Babylon (Rev. 18:1–4; 19:1, 2; 21:1–4). Instead of “redeemed, Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “scattered [sheep]” (see Jer. 50:17).

12. I, even I. Literally, “I, I.” Repetition of the pronoun emphasizes the Lord as the source of Israel’s confidence. If God is with them, who can be against them (see Rom. 8:31)? There is no other help.

Comforteth. See on ch. 40:1.

As grass. See on ch. 40:6.

13. Forgettest the Lord. This was the cause of all the difficulties that had beset Israel and all they had yet to face. On the danger of forgetting God, see Rom. 1:20–24.

Thy maker. See on ch. 40:12, 26, 28.

Feared continually. See on ch. 41:10.

14. The captive exile. The first clause of the verse reads literally, “speedily the one bowing down shall be released.” Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “the distressed one” instead of “the one bowing down.”

Die in the pit. Egypt was once the “pit” in which Israel languished. Similarly, for a time, Babylon was to hold them fast. But no power on earth can thwart God’s purpose to deliver His own when the time comes for their release. For the “pit” as a place of imprisonment see Gen. 37:20; Isa. 24:22; Zech. 9:11. For the same Hebrew word translated “dungeon” see Gen. 40:15; Jer. 38:6.

15. Divided the sea. See on v. 10.

16. My words. That is, the words of God in the mouth of Isaiah.

Plant the heavens. Or, “establish the heavens” (see on ch. 40:12). Isaiah envisions the earth restored to its Edenic state (see Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13).

17. Awake, awake. Compare v. 9, where Israel addresses these words to the Lord. Here God speaks to a reprobate Jerusalem to arouse her from a drunken stupor induced, as it were, by the wine of God’s fury. The meting out of judgment is often likened to the pouring out of a cup of wrath (Ps. 75:8; Jer. 25:15, 16; Eze. 23:32–34; Rev. 14:10). An earnest call is extended to Jerusalem to arouse herself and come to her senses before it is forever too late.

18. None to guide her. Jerusalem’s sons have fallen in battle (ch. 49:20, 21), and she finds herself a forlorn exile (see on ch. 49:21). She has had many children, but none of them is now present to help her. In her time of greatest need she finds herself utterly forsaken. If relief is to be provided it must come from God.

19. These two things. The one, famine and the sword, has brought about the other, desolation and destruction (see Eze. 14:21; Rev. 6:8).

By whom shall I comfort thee? Dead Sea scroll 1QIs, the LXX, the Syriac, and the Vulgate read, “Who will comfort you?”

20. A wild bull. Heb. *to’*, a word that occurs only here and in Deut. 14:5, and whose meaning is uncertain. It was apparently a clean wild animal (see Deut. 14:5) identified by some as the wild sheep and by others as the antelope. Jerusalem is described as in a state of siege, its defenders fallen in the streets. They are like a wild animal taken in a net, struggling frantically to escape, and finally overcome with exhaustion.

21. Drunken. For comment see on chs. 29:9; 51:17.

22. My fury. In chastening Israel, God dealt with them as a loving father deals with a wayward son (see Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5–11; Rev. 3:19). To Israel the cup had been bitter indeed.

No more drink it. The Lord arises in response to the appeal of v. 17 (see vs. 18, 19), to comfort (see on ch. 40:1) and rescue Jerusalem. The hour of her release is at hand.

23. That afflict thee. The reason for passing the cup of divine fury on to the oppressors of Israel is clearly set forth in chs. 10:5–13; 49:25. The unwonted cruelty of the conquerors of Israel cried for justice.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 DA 106; 3T 21

3 Ed 161, 307; GC 302; ML 33; PK 730, 733; SC 104; 6T 24; 7T 52, 230

6 MH 200; 6T 178

6–89T 231

7 PP 338, 341

7, 8 GC 460

8 ML 269

11–16GC 633

12 PP 341

12, 13 8T 114

13 FE 84; PP 596; 5T 25

21–23GC 633

22 PP 341

CHAPTER 52

1 *Christ persuadeth the church to believe his free redemption, 7 to receive the ministers thereof, 9 to joy in the power thereof, 11 and to free themselves from bondage. 13 Christ's kingdom shall be exalted.*

1. Awake, awake. Compare ch. 51:9, 17.

Thy beautiful garments. That is, garments of beauty and holiness (see Ex. 28:2). Zion had long been in a state of ignominy and obscurity. Now she was to awake and to resume her position of honor and glory (see pp. 28–32).

2. The dust. See on ch. 3:26; cf. ch. 47:1. Zion was to exchange the dust heap for the throne, a life of exile for one of royal splendor.

3. Sold yourselves. The Jews had “sold” themselves into the service of evil, and as a result had suffered at the hands of their heathen neighbors, the Assyrians, in Isaiah’s day, and were yet to be captives of Babylon. The bargain was shortsighted indeed, for thereby they exchanged virtue, honor, liberty, and peace for transgression, dishonor, bondage, and bloodshed. See Rom. 6:16.

Without money. In the redemption of Israel from oppression at the hands of the nations round about, Isaiah sees a promise of eventual deliverance from the dominion of sin. As Cyrus was to deliver God’s people from Babylon (chs. 44:28 to 45:13), so Christ would deliver them from the bondage of sin (Rom. 3:24; 1 Peter 1:18, 19). God was not obliged to pay a ransom for His people, either to the prince of evil or to the nations that held them in captivity.

4. Into Egypt to sojourn. The Hebrews had settled in Egypt at the invitation of Pharaoh. The hardships the Egyptians inflicted upon them were unprovoked.

The Assyrian. This probably refers to such Assyrian kings as Tiglath-pileser III and Sennacherib. The Assyrians had no valid reason for treating the Hebrews as they did. Cruelty and greed prompted their course. At times, however, Bible writers use the terms “Assyria” and “Assyrian” in a broad sense to include the Babylonians (see on Ezra 6:22).

5. Is blasphemed. Able to oppress the Hebrew people, the heathen thought their own gods must be stronger than Jehovah. This led them to despise and reproach Him as the true God.

6. Know my name. To know the name of God is to understand His will and to trust in Him (Ps. 9:10; 91:14).

7. How beautiful. There is no more joyous message than that of deliverance and peace. To the Jews under an alien yoke nothing could bring greater rejoicing than assurance that the hour of deliverance was at hand. Paul applies these words of Isaiah to the proclamation of the gospel message (Rom. 10:15). The deliverance here foretold was, first, that of literal Israel from the nations that oppressed them (see on Isa. 40:1; 44:28 to 45:13), and then the greater deliverance from sin and all evil through the suffering Servant (see on chs. 41:8; 42:1) of ch. 53, that is, the Messiah. It should be noted that ch. 52:7–15 constitutes an introduction to ch. 53.

Good tidings. That is, the gospel story (see on Mark 1:1; 2:10).

Thy God reigneth! God is still in control of the affairs of earth (see on Dan. 4:17) in spite of appearances to the contrary. His power to deliver His people, and later the triumph of the gospel prove that He, and not Satan, reigns (see Rev. 11:15).

8. Thy watchmen. The spiritual watchmen on the walls of Zion rejoice together at the approach of the messenger bearing tidings of deliverance.

Eye to eye. That is, “face to face,” as the same Hebrew expression is rendered in Num. 14:14. Compare Num. 12:8, “mouth to mouth” (see also 1 Cor. 13:12). From their watchtowers the sentinels see the Lord near at hand as He returns to reign (Isa. 52:7).

Bring again Zion. Or, “return to Zion.” The LXX and Dead Sea scroll 1QIs add, “with mercy.”

9. Break forth. See on v. 7.

10. Made bare. The power of God has been made manifest, bringing His people victory over their enemies (see Ps. 98:1, 2; cf. Eze. 4:7).

11. Depart ye. That is, from Babylon (see on ch. 48:20). Isaiah again looks forward to the time of restoration from Babylon. Compare the summons to “come out” of mystical Babylon. (Rev. 18:1–4).

Be ye clean. It was because of iniquity that Israel had been harassed by the Assyrians, and would later go into captivity. The returning exiles were to be a pure people. Without reformation of heart and life the physical restoration of Israel to their homeland would be of little permanent value. Those who come out of mystical Babylon must also be clean (Rev. 18:4; 21:27; cf. 1 John 3:3).

Bear the vessels. The leaders of Israel were to be entrusted with the transfer of the sacred vessels of the Temple from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:7, 8; 5:14, 15; 6:5). The priests and the Levites normally had charge of all things pertaining to the Temple (Num. 3:8, 38). They in particular were to keep themselves free from all manner of pollution (Lev. 20:26; 21:1; 22:2, 32). Leaders in the church today have a most solemn responsibility before God to set an example in godly living.

12. With haste. The Israelites had been compelled to depart from Egypt in haste (Ex. 12:33, 39), but it was not to be so with the return from Babylon (see 2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1–4). The difference was that Pharaoh was not willing (see on Ex. 4:21), while Cyrus was (see Isa. 44:28 to 45:13; cf. PK 557).

Go before you. The Lord prepared Cyrus’ heart to issue the decree of restoration (chs. 44:28; 45:1–4, 13; PK 557). To v. 12 Dead Sea scroll 1QIs adds, “God of all the earth He shall be called.”

Rereward. That is, “rear guard” (see on ch. 58:8).

13. Behold, my servant. These are the introductory words of a new section that continues through ch. 53:12. The chapter division should come between vs. 12 and 13 rather than after v. 15, for ch. 53:1 continues the line of thought without interruption. In this new section Messiah appears as the suffering Servant (see on chs. 41:8; 42:1). Nowhere in Scripture is there a more vivid presentation of the vicarious nature and atoning character of Christ’s death. It was God’s will that the work of restoration that began with the return from the Captivity should proceed apace and reach a certain climax in the coming of Messiah, who, through His sacrifice on Calvary, would provide deliverance from captivity to sin. Deliverance from Babylon made possible by Cyrus, who defeated Babylon (see on chs. 44:28; 45:1), prefigured the greater deliverance from the dominion of sin made possible by Christ’s victory over the powers of darkness and death (see Col. 2:14, 15; Rev. 1:18).

As time went by, the Jews placed increasing emphasis on those prophecies that pointed to the triumph of Israel over the heathen (see pp. 32, 33), until the idea of material and literal salvation for Israel as a nation practically eclipsed the concept here set forth by Isaiah of the Messiah as One who must first deliver them individually from the

power and penalty of sin (see DA 30; see on Luke 4:19). What Israel needed was not so much a great military savior to bring them victory over enemies without, as a Messiah to give them victory over sin.

Deal prudently. Or, “prosper,” as the same Hebrew word is rendered in Jer. 23:5. Messiah, the suffering Servant, would be successful in His mission (see Phil. 2:10, 11).

Exalted and extolled. Messiah would humble Himself, but God would highly exalt Him (Phil. 2:6–10; see on Luke 14:11). The great men of earth would marvel that a man so insignificant by human standards could have so tremendous an influence on men’s thinking, on their lives, and on the course of history (see Isa. 52:14, 15). Today many millions consider it an honor to be known as Christians.

The Assyrian Empire in Isaiah’s Time

9



14. Many were astonished. Men stand in amazement that one so highly honored as the Son of God should have voluntarily humbled himself as Christ did in His mission to earth. Jesus veiled His divinity in humanity (see on Luke 2:48) in order that men might be attracted to Him, not because of outward glory, but because of the beauty of His character. The Jews were perplexed that one who assumed no high honors, but lived the

⁹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 49:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

humble life that Jesus lived, could be the Messiah of prophecy. They saw in Him “no beauty,” no outward glory that led them to “desire him” (see on Isa. 53:2).

At thee. The Targums and the Syriac read “at him.”

His visage. Upon returning from His conflict with Satan in the wilderness of temptation, and during the greater conflict with the powers of darkness in Gethsemane (DA 137, 689), Jesus was so altered in appearance that even His friends scarcely knew Him.

15. Sprinkle many nations. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. The LXX reads, “many nations will marvel.” A slight alteration in the Hebrew text yields the reading, “cause many nations to gaze,” which resembles the LXX. The world would be amazed that the humble suffering Servant, Messiah, should be “exalted and extolled, and be very high” (v. 13).

Shut their mouths. The great men of earth would stand speechless before Him, in awe and reverence (see Job 29:9; 40:4).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1, 2 PK 724
- 1–109T 108
- 2 6T 434
- 3 5T 133
- 5 PK 352
- 6 Ed 302; PK 371
- 6–8FE 481
- 7 PK 374; GW 19; MH 107
- 7–10DA 828
- 8 EW 140; 3T 361; 9T 33
- 9, 10 GW 19; MH 108
- 10 PK 372
- 11 EW 62; GW 124; MM 184; Te 65; TM 444; 1T 262; 2T 335, 552; 3T 60; 4T 322, 330; 5T 83, 227, 591; 7T 148
- 12 Ev 61
- 14 AA 582; DA 118, 690; PK 686; 2T 207; 3T 380

CHAPTER 53

- 1 *The prophet, complaining of incredulity, excuseth the scandal of the cross, 4 by the benefit of his passion, 10 and the good success thereof.*

1. Who hath believed? Who would have believed the account of the humiliation and exaltation of Messiah, the Lord’s Servant (see on ch. 52:7, 13–15)! The story of the Saviour’s selfless love and His vicarious sacrifice—the theme of chs. 52:13 to 53:12—is the most amazing message, the greatest “good tidings” (see on ch. 52:7), of time and eternity. (Note that the chapter division should be made between vs. 12 and 13 of ch. 52 rather than where it now appears.)

Modern Jewish expositors deny that the graphic picture of the suffering “servant” (see on ch. 52:13) set forth in this chapter is in any sense a prediction, or that it applies to the Messiah. Modern Christian commentators generally tend to agree with this position. The tendency of both is to apply Isa. 53 to the sufferings of the Jews at the hands of their enemies, or to the pathetic experience of an individual Jew of Isaiah’s own time. Some

have suggested that the prophet here describes his own experience. Such NT passages as Matt. 8:17 and John 12:38 clearly apply Isa. 53 to Christ.

Our report. Literally, “the things of our hearing,” that is, “what we have heard.” This refers to the “good tidings” of ch. 52:7, which are reported at length in chs. 52:13 to 53:12.

The arm. The instrument by which a man accomplishes his purposes. Here God’s “arm,” or power, is revealed at work for the salvation of men.

2. He. That is, the “servant” introduced in ch. 52:13, Messiah (see on ch. 41:8).

Before him. Probably meaning “before God,” in the sense of being submissive to His will, and subject to His care (see on Luke 2:49).

As a tender plant. Christ grew to manhood—physically, mentally, and spiritually—in harmony with the natural laws of human development (see on Luke 2:52). As a plant draws nourishment from the soil, so He was to draw on the wisdom and strength of God. The figure of a “tender plant” seems to be an allusion to the “Branch” of Isa. 11:1.

Dry ground. A plant growing in dry ground appears stunted and unattractive. The Jewish leaders found the character of Jesus unappealing.

A root. Heb. *shoresheh*. Though the word is used in its literal sense, it appears much more often in the OT in a figurative sense. The figure is based on the fact that in many instances a plant or tree may be cut down to the root, but that if the root remains the plant will grow up again. Here the word for “root” is equivalent to “tender plant.”

No beauty. Literally, “no appearance,” that is, nothing to attract the attention. Men were not to be attracted to Christ by a display of supernatural glory, but by the beauty of a righteous life (see DA 23, 27, 43). He walked among men as a man—a perfect Man. Isaiah does not refer to Christ’s personal appearance as a man, however, but only to the fact that He was not the kind of Messiah the Jews were interested in (see on Luke 4:29). For comment on Jesus’ personal appearance see on Luke 2:52.

3. Despised and rejected. Throughout His life Christ knew what it was to be hated, reviled, and rejected.

A man of sorrows. In taking upon Himself the form of a man, Christ became sensitive to all the pain, sorrow, and disappointment known to man. Through the humanity of Jesus, divinity experienced all to which mortal men have fallen heir. All the ill treatment and malice that wicked men and evil angels could bring against Him were His constant lot, and reached a climax in His trial and crucifixion.

We hid. Instead of sympathizing with Christ in His affliction, men turned from Him with bitterness and contempt. They took no pity on Him, but reproached Him for His unhappy lot. See Matt. 26:29–31; 27:39–44. Even His disciples forsook Him and fled (Matt. 26:56).

4. Our griefs. Verses 4–6 emphasize the vicarious nature of Christ’s sufferings and death. The fact that it was for us, and not for Himself, that He suffered and died is reiterated nine times in these verses, and again in vs. 8, 11. He suffered in our stead. The pain, humiliation, and abuse that we deserve, He took upon Himself (see DA 25).

Smitten of God. The enemy made it appear that the sufferings of Jesus were punishment inflicted upon Him by a vengeful God because He was a sinner (see DA 471). If that were true, He could not be the world’s Redeemer.

5. The chastisement. That is, the chastisement necessary to make us at peace with God (see Rom. 5:1).

6. All we like sheep. This seems to have been a proverbial expression (Ps. 119:176; cf. Zech. 10:2; Matt. 18:11, 12). For comment on the rescue of the “lost sheep,” see on Luke 15:1–7, and on relations between the Shepherd and His “sheep,” see on John 10:1–18.

7. Opened not his mouth. That is, in protest or complaint or in self-defense. Silence was evidence of complete and unquestioning submission (see Matt. 26:39–44). What Messiah did, He did voluntarily and cheerfully, in order that doomed sinners might be saved. For the fulfillment of this prophecy see Matt. 26:63; 27:12, 14.

8. He was taken. That is, by death, meaning, “He died.”

From prison. Better, “through oppression.” Messiah was not given a fair hearing, in spite of the pretense of correct judicial procedure. The verdict was biased.

Declare his generation. The meaning of the Hebrew is not entirely clear, and various translations have been proposed. This section of Isaiah is poetic in form. Accordingly, the second clause of the first poetic parallelism of v. 8 is normally related in meaning to the first clause (see Vol. III, p. 24). An entirely valid interpretation of the Hebrew rendered “who shall declare his generation?” and one also in harmony with the poetic content, would be, “who was concerned with His fate?” that is, “with what befell Him.” The first clause clearly refers to the trial and condemnation of Jesus, and the second, thus translated, to the fact that no one took His part or stood to defend Him. “He bore it all alone.” Others have suggested that the clause means that Jesus would have no natural posterity to perpetuate His family line.

For the transgression. For the vicarious nature of Christ’s sufferings and death see on vs. 4–6.

9. With the wicked. The righteous Servant (see on ch. 52:13) was given the burial of a sinner, not of a saint. Having given up His life for transgressors, He was placed with them in death.

With the rich. He was to be buried in the tomb of a rich man, that of Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57–60).

Because. Or, “though,” or “although.” Christ suffered the fate of a sinner though He had done nothing to deserve that fate.

10. It pleased the Lord. The Lord was not delighted that His Servant (see on ch. 52:13), Messiah, should suffer, but rather, in view of the eternal welfare of men and the security of the universe, it was best for Him to suffer. “It pleased the Lord” in the sense that “it was the will of the Lord.” Only thus could the plan of salvation succeed. The sufferings of Christ were part of the eternal plan (Acts 2:23; 3:18).

Soul. Heb. *nephesh*, meaning, “himself,” or “his life” (see on 1 Kings 17:21; Ps. 16:10). His life substituted for our lives (see on Isa. 53:4; see DA 25).

As a result of sin, man had lost his innocence, his capacity to love and obey God, his home, his dominion over the earth, and even his life. Christ came to restore all things permanently, not only in this earth but throughout the universe.

An offering for sin. Heb. *’asham*, usually translated “trespass offering” (see Lev. 5:6). This offering was presented under circumstances in which restitution was required, either to man or to God. The death of God’s Servant provided an acceptable and effective atonement for sin which was responsible for the loss. This sacrifice was essential to man’s redemption and restoration (John 1:29; 17:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).

His seed. That is, “his offspring,” or “his descendants”—those willing to receive Him, to “believe on his name” (John 1:12), and to “be born again” (John 3:3). He “endured the cross” in view of this “joy that was set before him” (Heb. 12:2). That Christ would “see” His seed clearly implies His resurrection from the dead.

Prolong his days. Here the resurrection is even more clearly affirmed (see Heb. 7:16, 25; Rev. 1:18).

The pleasure of the Lord. That is, “the will of the Lord” (cf. “it pleased the Lord”). Christ took delight in performing the will of His Father (Matt. 26:39, 42; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38), and through Him God’s will would once more prevail among men (Matt. 6:10; 7:21; John 17:6). Messiah’s mission would be successful.

11. The travail. That is, the “labor,” meaning the results of His labors. The LXX and the two Dead Sea Isaiah scrolls here contain the additional word “light,” so that the first clause reads, “From the travail of his soul he shall see light.”

Shall be satisfied. His sacrifice would not be in vain. Because of His death many would live; because of His sufferings many would find peace and joy eternal (see DA 25; cf. Heb. 12:2). The result would fully justify the sacrifice necessary to achieve it.

By his knowledge. The meaning of this phrase is not entirely clear. It seems to refer to Christ’s intimate knowledge of the character and will of the Father, which He came to reveal to men (see Isa. 11:2; 50:4; Matt. 11:27; John 1:18; 5:19; 8:28; 10:15; 17:3).

My righteous servant. The Father here speaks of His Son, the Messiah (see on chs. 41:8; 52:13).

For he shall bear. Preferably, “and he shall bear.” This is a restatement of the vicarious nature of Messiah’s sacrifice stressed in vs. 4–6, 8, 10.

12. Therefore will I divide. God will reward His triumphant Servant with a place of high honor before all the universe.

The spoil. All that had been lost as a result of sin (see on v. 10) would be restored. Christ became “heir of all things,” and shares His inheritance with those He has rescued from the hand of the enemy (Heb. 1:2; Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:12; etc.). They share in His triumph, not as vassals or slaves, but as men and women redeemed by His blood and destined to reign with Him forever (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10; 22:5). He will receive a “name which is above every name,” one before which “every knee should bow” (Phil. 2:9, 10).

Poured out his soul. See on v. 10.

Made intercession. Here the intercessory ministry of Christ is clearly foretold (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–12DA 458

1–3AA 225

1–9PK 690

2 AH 461; DA 27; MB 25; PK 710

2, 3 GW 49

3 CS 23; DA 147, 600; EW 109, 160; GC 633, 641; MB 12; MM 19; SC 13; SL 77; SR 204; TM 19; 1T 78, 136, 137, 155, 505; 2T 202, 337, 345, 358, 516; 3T 326, 378, 407, 416, 457; 4T 121, 251, 379; WM 24

3, 4 CS 54; DA 471; PK 686; 1T 287

4 GC 416; 4T 418

4, 5 EW 114; PP 411; 4T 374

4–6DA 484

4–8AA 226

5 AA 472; COL 191; CT 22; DA 25; EW 112; FE 272; MH 124, 504; MM 19; SC 13; 1T 136, 150; 2T 73, 207, 516; 3T 481; 5T 316; 8T 43, 209

6 CT 269; DA 113, 329; FE 283; MH 71; Te 120

7 AA 227; DA 113, 136, 165, 706; GC 18; MB 71; PK 686; 2T 208

9, 10 AA 227

10 FE 402; 4T 374, 418

10–12FE 403; PK 692

11 AA 601; CS 213; CT 144; DA 770, 828; Ed 309; EW 288; GW 28; MH 134, 504; ML 349, 355; MM 135; SR 413; 2T 686; 4T 529; 6T 309, 423; 8T 43

12 AA 227; DA 751; SC 46

CHAPTER 54

1 *The prophet, for the comfort of the Gentiles, prophesieth the amplitude of their church, 4 their safety, 6 their certain deliverance out of affliction, 11 their fair edification, 15 and their sure preservation.*

1. Sing, O barren. A note of sublime joy characterizes chs. 54–62, which describe the glorious triumph of the gospel: throughout the earth. Israel, thus far “barren” of results (see pp. 30–32; cf. Isa. 5:1–7; John 3:3, 5; Gal. 5:22, 23), was to succeed in her appointed task. Her own sons and daughters would be “taught of the Lord” (Isa. 54:13), the Gentiles would be converted (ch. 56:6), and the Temple in Jerusalem would become “an house of prayer for all people” (v. 7). For a discussion of Israel’s role as a nation and of God’s plan to make her His instrument for the conversion of the world, see pp. 26–30. For Israel’s ultimate failure and the transfer of her privileges and responsibilities under the covenant relationship to the Christian church, see pp. 30–36.

2. Enlarge the place. Figuratively speaking, the land of Canaan was “the place” of Israel’s “tent.” But “as the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world” (COL 290) and Jerusalem should be “established as the mighty metropolis of the earth” (DA 577; see also pp. 29, 30).

Spare not. Or, “hold not back” (RSV). Israel was to go forward in faith and make preparations for the great ingathering of souls here promised. Today, God’s people should expect great things of Him and attempt great things for Him. God is never pleased, and His work on earth can never be finished, until the church rises in faith to unite with divine agencies in proclaiming to the world the knowledge of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour.

3. Break forth. If Israel would but rise in faith to meet her destiny as a nation, success would exceed her fondest expectations. Thus it will be in our day when the people of God are ready to receive the power God waits to impart to them.

Inherit the Gentiles. Or, “take possession of the nations” (see on v. 2).

The desolate cities. The cities of Israel that had fallen into ruin when their inhabitants were slain by the sword or carried into captivity would be needed once more to absorb the increase in population.

4. Shame of thy youth. Jehovah brought Israel out of Egypt to become His bride, but she had played the harlot by serving other gods (Jer. 3:1–11; Eze. 16:8–16; Hosea 2:5–13). This was her disgrace and shame. Her ugly past would be given and forgotten, and

she would be restored to the privileges and honor originally promised her (see pp. 28–32).

Thy widowhood. This alludes to the captivity in Babylon, when because of infidelity to her Husband Israel was permitted to go into exile (Lam. 1:1; 2:5, 6; cf. Hosea 2:6–13).

5. *Thine husband.* Although Israel had forsaken her “husband,” He would bring her back to Himself and again be her husband (see Eze. 16:8; Hosea 2:14–20; 3:1–5).

God of the whole earth. See on ch. 56:7. The time was to come when all the inhabitants of earth would submit to His wise and just rule and all the earth would again come under His jurisdiction (see pp. 28–30; see on ch. 45:23). All who refused to yield allegiance to the God of heaven would perish (see Zech. 14:9–19). Jehovah is not God of the Jews alone, but also of the Gentiles (Rom. 3:29). Isaiah beheld the whole earth “full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3). Habakkuk spoke of the time when “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14).

6. *Lord hath called thee.* When Israel left the Lord, God still loved her and called her to return. Compare Hosea’s experience with his faithless wife, Gomer (Hosea 2:2–23; 3:1–5).

Refused. Or, “rejected,” that is, from being a “wife.”

7. *For a small moment.* During the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity Israel seemed to be cast off and forgotten. In reality, however, that bitter experience was permitted by God to reveal to Israel the folly of her ways and to persuade her of the wisdom of being true to Him (see Hosea 2:6–23). Often, amid the difficulties and disappointments of life, it is our privilege to hear the tender voice of God calling us back from our own willful ways to walk with Him.

Gather thee. The gathering of Israel is one of Isaiah’s favorite themes (see chs. 11:12; 27:12; 43:5, 6; 56:8; 60:4; 66:18). The literal return of the Jews to their homeland after the Babylonian captivity, here foretold, prefigured the greater gathering of all God’s people into the heavenly Canaan.

8. *A little wrath.* This verse repeats the thought of v. 7. Concerning the wrath of God, see on 2 Kings 13:3.

9. *Waters of Noah unto me.* Several ancient manuscripts and versions read, “the days of Noah unto me.” Following the Deluge God promised that He would not again destroy the earth with a flood (Gen. 9:11, 15). A similar promise was now given the people of Judah, if they would only remain loyal to God once He had gathered them to their homeland.

10. *Mountains shall depart.* Through Isaiah, God affirms the reliability of His promises. Compare Christ’s affirmation of the enduring quality of all God’s will as revealed in the Scriptures (Matt. 5:18).

Covenant of my peace. That is, His covenant that results in peace (see Num. 25:12; Eze. 34:25; 37:26). When Messiah came to this world the angelic multitude proclaimed God’s message of “peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14), and when He returned to the Father He left a promise of peace (John 14:27).

11. *Fair colours.* See on 2 Kings 9:30, where the same Hebrew word is rendered “painted.”

Lay thy foundations. The Lord foretells what Jerusalem will be like in its restored state. Compare John’s description of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14–20).

Sapphires. See on Job 28:6.

12. Windows. The LXX reads “battlements,” and the RSV, “pinnacles.”

Thy borders of pleasant stones. Or, “your wall of precious stones” (RSV; see Rev. 21:18).

13. Children. Literally, “sons,” a common Hebrew expression for progeny, irrespective of age. It includes those who are young in years but does not refer to them exclusively. Here it refers to all Jews, as “children” of their mother, Jerusalem.

Taught of the Lord. Heretofore, in their waywardness, the Jews had refused to heed the instruction of the Lord (see on ch. 1:2). Henceforth, in the restoration, they would be willing to learn of Him. In John 6:45, Christ applies these words of Isaiah to Himself and to His own teaching. Under the new covenant God would write the principles of His law within men’s hearts (see Jer. 31:33, 34; John 14:26, 27; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 8:10, 11; 1 John 2:27). For the importance of heeding the revealed will of God, see on Matt. 7:21–27.

Peace. That is, complete well-being—of heart, mind, body, and environment.

14. In righteousness. Only that which is right is permanent. God’s revealed will is the only sure thing this world knows.

Not come near thee. See Ps. 46:1–7; cf. on Ps. 91:7.

15. Surely gather together. Or, “surely attack.” The wicked have often united against the people of God, but such efforts are doomed to fail. Had the Jews proved faithful to God upon their return from captivity, they would have been the recipients of marvelous blessings (see pp. 29, 30). Their enemies would have conspired to take these blessings from them by force, but in so doing they would “fall” (see Eze. 38:8–23; Zech. 12:2–9; 14:2, 3). In the last days also there will be, on the part of all the hosts of evil, a united, but unsuccessful, effort for the destruction of the saints (see Rev. 16:14–16; 19:11–21). See pp. 30, 35, 36.

16. The waster. That is, the one who lays waste, or ravages. God asserts His sovereign control over the powers of earth. No forces may operate except as He shall permit (see on Dan. 4:17). No enemy may pass the bounds God has set for him.

17. No weapon. See on v. 16. God will care for His own and vindicate them before their enemies. Neither evil men nor demons can prevail against them (see Isa. 50:8, 9; Zech. 3:1, 2).

Servants of the Lord. That is, the people of Israel (see on ch. 41:8).

Their righteousness. More exactly, “their vindication.” God will vindicate the cause of His servants. When the enemy accuses them and fights against them He will pronounce them innocent and deliver them.

When confronted with forbidding circumstances in which it appears that suffering and injury at the hands of scheming men are about to be experienced, it is the privilege of the faithful Christian to say with the psalmist, “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?” (Ps. 118:6).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 7T 9

2, 3 PK 374

2–56T 23

4, 5 MB 64

5 MH 202

8 MH 123; TM 519

9, 10 Ed 115; PP 107
10 DA 483; MB 100; MH 72; PP 342, 657; 4T 328
11–14CT 454
11–17PK 724
13 COL 27; DA 387; ML 33
14 Ed 182
14, 15, 17 FE 478
17 Ed 155; GC 288; MB 18, 35; 5T 601

CHAPTER 55

1 *The prophet, with the promises of Christ, calleth to faith, 6 and to repentance. 8 The happy success of them that believe.*

1. Every one that thirsteth. That is, those who thirst for a better understanding of the will and ways of God, and for grace to be at peace with Him (Ps. 42:1, 2; 63:1; Matt. 5:6; John 7:37; Rev. 21:6; 22:17). Man was created with an inner longing for God that finds lasting satisfaction only in fellowship with Him.

The poetic beauty of this chapter is unsurpassed in Scripture. No more gracious invitation could be given for men to accept the blessings of salvation. None are excluded—“whosoever will” may come and “take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). There is no room here for the idea that some men are created to be subjects of salvation and others of reprobation, some to be saved and others to be lost. God does not interfere with the free exercise of man’s power of choice (see Eze. 18:31, 32; 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9). In this chapter emphasis is placed on the ingathering of the Gentiles and on the success of God’s eternal plan to restore the earth to its original state of purity and perfection (see Isa. 55:5, 8–11; see pp. 28–30).

Come ye to the waters. God invites all men everywhere to partake freely of His grace. Water, wine, milk, and bread (v. 2) here represent all spiritual blessings (see Matt. 26:27–29; John 4:10, 13, 14; 1 Cor. 11:25–27; 1 Peter 2:2).

Hath no money. In the figurative language here used the person without “money” is the one who realizes his spiritual need (see on >Matt. 5:3). He is well aware that he has no merits of his own to offer to God as a price for the precious gift of salvation. But God invites all such to come in spite of their spiritual poverty. The price of their salvation has been paid by the Saviour.

Come, buy. Those who desire spiritual blessings must not only “hunger” and “thirst” for them, but also put forth effort to secure them (see on Matt. 13:44–46). The blessings of salvation are free, yet they may be obtained only at the cost of all that a man has. God has never promised to bestow salvation upon those who are indifferent to it or unwilling to put forth the effort to obtain it.

Wine and milk. The blessings of salvation are here represented by products which, in the ancient Orient, were considered representative of all the good things of life. The sinner’s every need will be supplied in Christ Jesus.

2. Spend money. This is a reproof to men for spending time, effort, and money on things of little or no value while neglecting the more important things of life (see on John 6:27).

Satisfieth not. Those who do not partake of the spiritual bounties God has so freely provided will suffer from spiritual anemia and be dimly aware of a hidden hunger in their souls which the material things of earth can never satisfy.

Soul delight itself. God encourages men to place their primary interest in spiritual rather than material things (see on Matt. 6:24–34; cf. Matt. 23:23). Those who make first things first will discover that their material needs are satisfied more easily and more abundantly.

Fatness. A common Hebrew expression denoting abundance and prosperity—here, spiritual prosperity (see Gen. 27:28, 39; 45:18; etc.).

3. Incline your ear. That is, be attentive to spiritual things. Be ready to listen to what God may say to you (see on ch. 30:21). Be willing to know and to do the things He makes known to you.

Your soul shall live. That is, “you will live” (see on Ps. 16:10). None but those who respond to the appeal of vs. 1–3 and partake of Heaven’s bounties ever truly “enter into life” (Matt. 19:17). Only in Christ can men ever “have life” and “have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

An everlasting covenant. All—Jew and Gentile alike (see Gal. 3:29; see on Isa. 55:1)—are invited to make the covenant relationship a reality in their own personal experience. This refers to the “new” covenant, under which God promises to write His law within men’s hearts (see on Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 8:10, 11). This covenant embraces all the promises made to the fathers (Gen. 12:1–3; 17:7, 8; Ps. 89:3, 4, 28, 29, 36, 37; 105:8–12; see also pp. 26, 27).

Sure mercies of David. See p. 31. David was a great sinner. But when his sins were pointed out he repented sincerely and completely (see on Ps. 51), and accordingly became the recipient of divine mercy. This mercy is as “sure” for us today as it was for David.

4. I have given him. That is, David (v. 3), who was a type of Christ and upon whose throne Christ was to sit (Ps. 89:3, 4, 20, 35–37; Eze. 34:23, 24; Hosea 3:5; see on Deut. 18:15; Matt. 1:1). For the selection of David as an example of the experience of one who enters fully into the privileges and responsibilities of the covenant relationship, see p. 31.

A leader. Heb. *nagid*, “chief,” “leader,” “captain,” “ruler,” “prince” (see 1 Sam. 10:1; 13:14; 1 Kings 1:35; 1 Chron. 5:2; 28:4; Dan. 9:25).

5. A nation. This refers to the Gentiles (Ps. 18:43; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 2:19; 1 Peter 2:9, 10). The Jews were the only people whom God had “known of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2). The Jews often referred to Gentiles as “strangers” (see Isa. 56:6).

Run unto thee. See pp. 28–30.

He hath glorified thee. For all that God purposed to do for Israel, see pp. 26–28.

6. Seek ye the Lord. Here was where Israel had failed, and the reason for her exile—she had not sought to know or to obey the will of God (see ch. 6:9–12). Again and again God had invited Israel to seek Him (see Deut. 4:29; Ps. 105:4–6; Jer. 29:13, 14; etc.). Throughout the ages God has extended similar exhortations to His church (2 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 22:17).

While he is near. God was in a special sense “near” to His people Israel (Deut. 4:7; Ps. 148:14), but He is also “near” to all who call upon Him (Ps. 46:1; 145:18). The time comes, however, when stubborn rejection of the pleadings of God’s Spirit closes the door of mercy and drives the divine presence away (Isa. 1:15; Hosea 5:6; Matt. 25:10–12; cf. John 7:34; 8:21).

7. Let the wicked. How often, through His messengers, God pleads with men to abandon their lives of sin and promises them pardon (Isa. 1:16–19; Jer. 7:3–7; Eze. 18:23, 30–32; Matt. 11:28, 29; Luke 24:47; Acts 3:19; 13:38).

8. My thoughts. How little man comprehends of the boundless goodness and mercy of God, and of His infinite purpose for every person saved by divine grace! Too often man's thoughts are tinged with bitterness and estrangement; yet God's are always of tender mercy and forgiving grace (Ex. 34:6, 7; Ps. 103:8–14; Jer. 29:11–13).

9. Higher than the earth. Man's thoughts are of time, and God's, of eternity. Man's thoughts are of self, and God's, of the creatures of His hand. Man thinks of what he can get, and God, of what He can give.

10. As the rain. The forces of nature are obedient to Him who created them. Rain serves Him by refreshing the earth and enabling it to bring forth verdure, fragrance, beauty, and food for the joy and well-being of man.

Returneth. Rain is a gift of God to man. It remains here to accomplish the beneficent purpose for which it was sent. That purpose accomplished, it returns to heaven as vapor, ready to be sent forth again. Thus it is with all things ordained of God, whether in the realm of the material or of the spiritual.

11. My word. The words of God represent His will and are endowed with power to make that will effective. They have power to create (Gen. 1:3; Ps. 33:6, 9), to impart spiritual energy, life, and blessing (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Rev. 1:3), to judge and to condemn (Heb. 4:12; Rev. 19:15), to raise men from the grave (Job 14:14, 15; John 11:43, 44; 1 Thess. 4:16), and to heal and redeem (Matt. 9:2, 6; Mark 2:5, 9–12; John 5:24; 6:63).

That which I please. As with the rain and the snow (v. 10), so with the “word”—all accomplish the beneficent purpose that gave them being. Thus it was also with Christ, the living Word (John 1:1), in whose hands “the pleasure of the Lord” was to “prosper” (see on Isa. 53:10).

12. Ye shall go out. The accomplishment of the Lord's will (v. 11) brings joy. Verses 12, 13 picture the people of God going out to the world on their mission to bring life and healing. They go forth as sowers, scattering everywhere the words of divine life. Nature breaking forth into happy anthems of praise here represents the joy that fills the hearts of men when they learn of God's love and will for them.

13. Instead of the thorn. Isaiah here repeats a favorite figure—the transformation of the world from a barren wilderness into a flourishing garden (Isa. 35:1, 2, 6; 41:18, 19; 43:19; 44:3; etc.; cf. Eze. 47:1–12). In the Bible righteous men are often compared to fruitful trees (Ps. 1:3; Luke 6:44, 45), and the wicked to briars and thorns (Isa. 9:18). The power of God can and will transform the face of the earth, causing gardens of delight and beauty to spring up in place of arid, burning deserts. Virtue and holiness take the place of vice and wickedness, and joy and peace take the place of fear and trouble.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 CH 211; COL 235; MB 18; PP 413; SC 49; 9T 228

1–3COL 233

1–5PK 696

1–7TM 415

1–13TM 357

2 COL 201; CS 243; CT 12; Ev 266; FE 471; MH 441; ML 132, 157; 2T 575; 3T 250; 6T 83, 165; 8T 307
 3 FE 478; PK 320
 3–5AA 223
 6 2T 291; 5T 529, 590; 8T 253
 6, 7 PK 319; TM 343; 5T 540, 629; 8T 99
 6–11TM 358
 7 COL 205; MYP 70; PK 84; PP 726; SC 53
 7–9MB 114; 5T 337
 8 TM 503; 2 T 633; 3T 201, 244
 8, 9 COL 397; GC 343; 5T 698; 8T 146, 235
 8–136T 308
 10 COL 67
 10–13MH 406
 11 COL 65; Ed 105; FE 472; GW 267; 1T 261; 4T 537; 6T 131
 13 DA 305; GC 675; PK 729

CHAPTER 56

1 *The prophet exhorteth to sanctification. 3 He promiseth it shall be general without respect of persons. 9 He inveigheth against blind watchmen.*

1. Thus saith the Lord. The central thought of ch. 56 is the conversion of the Gentiles. Against this bright prospect is placed the gloomy picture of Israel's unreadiness to receive them. A great work of reformation is necessary before God can work to bring into fellowship with His people these "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12). This work of reform is to center in a return to faithful Sabbath observance. The message of this chapter is fraught with meaning for the church today.

Keep ye judgment, and do justice. Better, "Keep justice and do righteousness." Compare the pointed admonition of Micah 6:8. Religion is not mere theory; it is intensely practical. God's people must be orthodox in conduct as well as in doctrine before God can work through them for the conversion of others (see on Matt. 7:21–27).

Near to come. If Israel had cooperated fully with God's requirements, His glorious promises would not have been long delayed. The same is true of the church today.

To be revealed. Revealed, that is, in the fulfillment of the glorious promises to make Israel His mighty instrument for the conversion of the world (see pp. 28–30). The gospel was not for the Jews only, but for all men.

2. Keepeth the sabbath. It was as important for converted Gentiles to observe faithfully the Sabbath (v. 6) as it was for the Jews. Genuine Sabbath observance is evidence that men recognize God as their Creator and Redeemer and that they are willing to render Him unquestioning obedience in all things (see on Isa. 58:13; Eze. 20:12, 20). It is no less essential for Gentiles to recognize these principles than it ever was for Jews. God created both; He has provided for the salvation of both (Rom. 1:16, 17), and has equal claim to their loyal obedience. Furthermore, the principles involved in man's relationship to God as Creator and Redeemer are no different in Christian times from what they were in Jewish times, and Sabbath observance is no less important today than it was then.

3. Son of the stranger. That is, the Gentile converted to Judaism.

Separated me. The Gentile convert was not to feel himself in any way inferior to those who had been born Jews. Both were to share equally in the privileges and responsibilities involved in the covenant relationship.

A dry tree. A dry tree could bear no fruit. Eunuchs were, according to the law, not to “enter into the congregation of the Lord” (see on Deut. 23:1), that is, not to participate in the services of the Temple. Isaiah here assures such persons of God’s impartial love and acceptance. They were not to feel forsaken by God or despised and forgotten in Israel.

4. That keep. See on v. 2. Irrespective of conditions over which they have no control, those who love God and serve Him with undivided hearts are accepted of Him (see Acts 10:34, 35).

5. A name better than. According to the Hebrews a man’s ultimate earthly happiness depended upon having one or more sons through whom the family name and inheritance might be preserved (see on Matt. 1:1). Leaving no posterity, a eunuch might fear that his name and inheritance would be lost in Israel. However, God promises such persons who remain faithful to Him something far better than children, that is, new names (Rev. 2:17), and the assurance that their names will be inscribed in the book of life (Rev. 3:5). Physical handicaps in no way affect a man’s standing before God. He is concerned only with character and fidelity to principles of righteousness and truth.

Everlasting name. That is, one unaffected by physical handicaps or other conditions beyond a man’s control.

6. Sons of the stranger. See on v. 3. Gentiles were to enjoy the same rights and privileges as Jews. The only condition was submission to the Lord’s requirements.

To love. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “to bless.”

The sabbath. See on v. 2. This verse is a conclusive answer to those who assert that the Sabbath is not for the Gentiles.

7. To my holy mountain. That is, to join the Messianic kingdom (see Isa. 11:9; 57:13; Joel 3:17; cf. Ps. 48:2). Isaiah again refers to the glorious ingathering of the Gentiles (see pp. 28–30).

Mine house. God intended that the Temple should be a house of prayer (1 Kings 8:30, 38, 41–43), but the Jews had made of it a “den of robbers” (Jer. 7:11; cf. Luke 19:46).

For all people. Had Israel been faithful, men from all nations would have come to Jerusalem to worship God (see pp. 28–30), but on account of transgression the Jews were eventually rejected and the Temple was destroyed (Jer. 7:11–15; Matt 23:37, 38; 24:1, 2). The blessings that might have been theirs were given to the Gentiles (Isa. 60:3; Mal. 1:11; Acts 13:46, 47; see pp. 35, 36).

8. The outcasts of Israel. Probably a reference to Jews, who, by their course of action, have alienated themselves from God; perhaps also the Jews in exile (see Deut. 30:1–3; Ps. 106:43–45; 147:2, 3; Jer. 29:10–14).

Gather others. That is, Gentiles (see John 10:16).

9. Ye beasts. The scene changes. The “beasts of the field” are the foreign nations soon to “devour” the people of Judah because of their sins. In contrast with the bright prospects that were to follow obedience, Isaiah now (vs. 9–12) depicts the wretched spiritual condition of leaders and people and its results (see on v. 1).

10. His watchmen. Those whose responsibility it was to instruct others—the leaders—are blind themselves and unable to discern the danger that threatens (see Jer. 6:17; see on Matt. 15:14; 23:16).

Ignorant. That is, of God’s ways.

Dumb dogs. The leaders of Israel lacked even the intelligence of a watchdog. They slept on at the approach of danger and failed to sound a warning.

11. Greedy dogs. Instead of seeking the welfare of the flock entrusted to their care the leaders of Israel were like dogs that devoured the sheep they were supposed to protect (see Jer. 12:10, 11; Eze. 34:8). A fearful responsibility rested upon these shepherds, whose only interest was in themselves. God would hold them accountable for the loss of the flock (Jer. 13:20; Eze. 34:9, 10).

12. Come ye. In a time of imminent peril, with the call already gone forth to the wild beasts to “come to devour” (v. 9), the unfaithful shepherds bid their fellows to come and drink (cf. Matt. 24:49; Luke 12:19).

To morrow. They acted as if time would go on indefinitely, as if judgment were not “near” (see v. 1). Their drinking and merrymaking were continual and habitual. When God revealed His “righteousness” they would be destroyed, not delivered. The line of thought introduced in vs. 9–12 continues without interruption through ch. 57:12.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1, 2 GC 451; 9T 228
- 3 PK 372
- 6, 7 DA 288; GC 451; PK 46
- 6–8PK 372
- 7 AA 9; DA 27
- 8 GC 451
- 10 5T 211; 8T 248
- 11 8T 67
- 12 CS 232; DA 635

CHAPTER 57

- 1 *The blessed death of the righteous.* 3 *God reproveth the Jews for their whorish idolatry.* 13 *He giveth evangelical promises to the penitent.*

1. The righteous perisheth. This chapter continues, without interruption, the line of thought begun in ch. 56:9. Some have pointed out that this section aptly describes conditions during the opening part of the reign of Manasseh (see Vol. II, p. 88). Whether this message was given at that time, to encourage those who suffered, or at some other, is not known.

Merciful men. That is, “men of *chesed*” (see on Job 10:12; Ps. 36:7).

Taken away. Isaiah takes comfort in the thought that in times such as those described in this chapter the death of the righteous delivers them from greater evils that would befall them were they to live on.

2. Rest in their beds. The righteous would find peace and rest in death. The grave would be to them a not unwelcome release from the trials and distresses of a time of trouble (cf. Isa. 26:20; Rev. 14:13; see on Isa. 57:1).

3. The seed. Isaiah summons the doers of iniquity to draw near and hear the word of the Lord. In the Bible men are commonly referred to as the “children” of those whose practices they follow (John 8:39, 41, 44).

4. Sport yourselves. The wicked were mocking and deriding the righteous.

5. Enflaming yourselves with idols. Literally, “the ones inflaming themselves among the oaks.” These are the “sons of the sorceress” and the “seed of the adulterer and the whore” of v. 3. Isaiah here gives a vivid description of the orgiastic excitement of the religious rites practiced by the fertility cults of the time (see Vol. II, pp. 38–40). In Rom. 1:24–32 Paul seems to refer to these licentious practices carried on in the name of religion.

Slaying the children. The apostate Jews whom Isaiah here addresses were also guilty of offering human sacrifices (see on Lev. 18:21; 20:2; cf. 2 Kings 16:3, 4; 2 Chron. 28:3, 4; Jer. 19:5; Eze. 16:20). This horrible practice was, at times, carried on in the Valley of Hinnom, immediately to the south of Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 7:31; 19:5, 6).

6. Smooth stones of the stream. Literally, “smooth [stones] of the stream [Heb. *nachal*].” *Nachal* may refer either to the stream itself or to the narrow valley through which it flows. Isaiah here chides apostate Jews for another act of idolatry—the veneration of stone pillars such as the heathen worshiped. These pillars were anointed with oil and treated as gods (see on Gen. 28:18).

A meat offering. That is, “a meal offering” (see on Lev. 2:1).

Receive comfort. Or, “repent,” or “relent.” These idolatrous practices had provoked the wrath of God; how could He be appeased by them (cf. Jer 5:7, 9)?

7. Set thy bed. The image is appropriate because idolatry was regarded as spiritual adultery, and the most debasing forms of immorality constituted an integral part of the supposedly sacred rites of heathen religions (see Eze. 16:15–36; see Vol. II, pp. 38–40).

8. Thy remembrance. Or, “thy symbol,” possibly the phallic symbol commonly worshiped by the fertility cults (see Vol. II, pp. 38, 39). Israel had been commanded to write the words of God upon the posts and gates of their houses that they might the more readily remember their obligations to Him (Deut. 6:5–9; 11:13, 18–20, 22). Faithless Israel, however, had removed the Lord’s memorial and set up symbols of idolatry.

Discovered thyself. In forsaking the Lord and yielding herself to other masters Israel committed spiritual adultery (Isa. 1:21; Jer. 2:20; 3:1–14, 20; Eze. 16:15–35; 23:13–49; Hosea 1:2; 2:2–13).

9. King. Heb. *melek*. In the original Hebrew consonantal text (see Vol. I, pp. 25, 26) this word also stands for Molech, which many commentators believe to be intended here. Some, however, think the king of Assyria is here referred to (2 Kings 16:7–13). The context favors the former suggestion. The description that follows is of a harlot adorning herself in order to entice her prey. Isaiah thus pictures Israel engaging in spiritual adultery (see on vs. 5, 7, 8).

Hell. Heb. *she’ol*, the figurative realm of the dead (see on Prov. 15:11).

10. Saidst thou not. The Jewish leaders persisted in their apostate course, unwilling to admit eventual failure.

Life of thine hand. The exact meaning of this Hebrew idiom is not known. The idea, however, is that the king of Judah found means of sustaining his perverted policy in spite of the difficulties he encountered in carrying it through.

11. Of whom. Fear of men had led Israel to disobey God. Such a course of action implied that it was more important to avoid the disfavor of man than the disfavor and

judgments of God. This fear had led to alliances with Assyria (2 Kings 16:7, 8) and Egypt (Isa. 36:6), and friendly relations with a certain Babylonian faction (ch. 39:1–3).

12. Declare thy righteousness. God will expose to the world the hollow and empty self-righteousness of Judah.

13. Thy companies. That is, “thy idols.” In its time of need let Judah call upon them for deliverance.

14. Cast ye up. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs adds, “a highway” (see ch. 62:10). A highway was to be prepared to facilitate travel to the “holy mountain” of the Lord (ch. 57:13; see on chs. 35:8; 40:3, 4). Isaiah thus figuratively calls upon the leaders of Israel to remove obstructions that hindered the fulfillment of His purpose for Israel (see pp. 30–32).

15. Inhabiteth eternity. Literally, “dwells forever.” These sublime words characterize God as the Eternal One. The word *Shekinah*, the term designating the glorious light of the divine presence that hovered over the ark of the covenant (COL 288; see on Gen. 3:24), is from *shakan*, here translated “inhabiteth.”

High and holy place. That is, the highest heaven.

With him also. Comforting thought, that One so great as God cares about us and condescends to dwell in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17; cf. Gal. 2:20; DA 23). However insignificant we may be in our own sight, it is our privilege to be recipients of Heaven’s greatest gifts. Whatever our needs God is ever ready to supply them.

Contrite. Contrition and humility—the spirit of sincere repentance for sin, coupled with a sense of one’s inability, of oneself, to earn salvation (see Rom. 7:18)—are the two essential qualifications for acceptance with God (see Micah 6:8; see on Ps. 51:10; Matt. 11:29). Contrition prepares the way for justification, as humility does for sanctification. God can do little for the man who does not feel a keen sense of his own need and who does not reach out for power from above (see on Luke 15:2).

16. Not contend. There are times when God, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, permits trials and chastisements to befall His people. For instance, He permitted the Jews to become subject to Babylon, but after 70 years (2 Chron. 36:21–23; Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10; Dan. 9:2) He provided for their return to Judea. Compare Ps. 103:9.

The spirit should fail. If God were to take an attitude of hostility toward men because of their evil ways, and to “contend” with them “for ever,” the life He had given would become extinct and the souls He had created (see on Gen. 2:7) would cease to be. That, however, would be contrary to His purpose in creating them.

17. His covetousness. Covetousness is a form of selfishness, and this besetting sin of Israel was at the root of every other evil (Jer. 6:13; Eze. 33:31; 1 Tim. 6:10; see on Luke 12:15).

I hid me. It is not in the nature of God to smite and to destroy. For a time, and in order to accomplish some specific objective, He may “hide” His face (Ps. 30:7; 89:46; Eze. 39:29; see on Isa. 54:8) and seem to abandon those whom He loves (see on Heb. 12:6–11).

Frowardly. Literally, “turning backward,” or “backsliding” (see on Jer. 8:5; Hosea 4:16). The judgments God permitted to fall upon the Hebrews failed to reform them. They persisted in their obdurate course. Like so many today, they chose to do what they pleased rather than to live by principle.

18. To his mourners. Commentators are generally agreed that this expression should be joined to v. 19 so as to read, literally, “and for his mourners creating the fruit of the

lips.” Those of Israel who mourn for the evil of their ways and for the evil that has befallen them as a nation have the promise of mercy and deliverance (Isa. 61:2; 66:10; Jer. 13:17; Eze. 9:4; see on Matt. 5:4). They will praise God for His mercy and grace (Hosea 14:2; Heb. 13:15).

19. Peace. God’s message of peace is the good news of salvation (see on ch. 52:7). The gospel is for all, near and far, Jew and Gentile. It is for all who are willing to hear (Acts 2:39; Eph. 2:12–17). God will “heal” of the malady of sin all who desire to forsake sin and follow Him.

20. The wicked. Peace and healing (v. 19) come only to those who heed the message of salvation. The wicked find no peace because they reject the only means by which it may be achieved.

21. There is no peace. Peace is the fruit of righteousness (see on ch. 32:17). Among the works of the flesh are “hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies” (Gal. 5:19, 20), whereas love, joy, and peace are among the fruits of the Spirit (vs. 22, 23). The wicked cannot hope to enjoy either peace of mind within or tranquillity without. Where there is a departure from divine principles, dissension, variance, and strife inevitably arise. If the world would put away strife, it must first put away sin, the cause of strife. Only righteousness within can produce peace without.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

15 COL 162; DA 180, 300; FE 370, 451, 496; GC 275; MYP 247; PK 314; PP 33; TM 207, 249, 278; 5T 50, 494; 6T 125; 8T 72, 220, 334; 9T 147

16–19Ed 147; 8T 219

17–19PK 315

18 DA 301

20, 21 DA 336

21 8T 219

CHAPTER 58

1 *The prophet, being sent to reprove hypocrisy, 3 expresseth a counterfeit fast and a true. 8 He declareth what promises are due unto godliness, 13 and to the keeping of the sabbath.*

1. Cry aloud. In ch. 57:15–21 Isaiah presents Heaven’s message of reconciliation and peace. In ch. 58 he gives instruction as to what repentance involves, and what is essential before the promised blessings may be realized. A call to repentance cannot be effective unless it sets forth clearly what men must do about sin in their lives (see Eze. 13:10–16). A call to reformation is a call to decisive action. Compare the message of Joel 2:12, 13.

Shew my people. Leaders who fail to draw a clear line between right and wrong, that the people may understand the principles involved, are “blind leaders of the blind” (Matt. 15:14; Luke 6:39; see on Matt. 23:16).

2. They seek me daily. Outwardly the nation of Judah professed to follow the Lord, but inwardly they were far from Him. They held to the external forms of religion, but neglected its basic principles. They fasted and prayed, observed the Sabbath, kept the sacred feasts, brought their offerings to the Temple, and attended solemn assemblies, while they engaged in every form of iniquity (ch. 1:11–15). Theirs was an incongruous attempt to serve both God and mammon (see on Matt. 6:24–34). They professed to love the light, but chose to live in darkness (see on Matt. 6:19–23). They wanted all this world had to offer—and heaven too. They thought to enjoy the privileges of obedience, but were loath to shoulder its responsibilities (see pp. 32, 33; see on Matt. 21:28–32).

3. *Wherefore have we fasted?* Hypocrisy had permeated their religious life (see on Matt. 6:2). These hypocrites thought to make themselves acceptable to God by undergoing various forms of bodily affliction. Fasting, they believed, would atone for iniquity. Their darkened minds failed to realize that God is righteous and that He requires righteousness of His children. They forgot that the essence of true religion is the exercise of justice, mercy, and humility (Micah 6:8; see on Isa. 57:15).

Find pleasure. These hypocrites fasted because they thought thereby to earn God's approval. They did not grasp the spiritual meaning of such things as fasting and Sabbath observance, and thought that adherence to the forms of religion gave them license to gratify their own passions and to oppress the poor and the helpless.

Exact all your labours. Literally, "oppress all your laborers" (see Lev. 19:13; James 5:4).

4. *For strife and debate.* The forms of fasting were religiously followed, but the spirit of true fasting (see v. 6) was missing. Rigorous practices served only to excite the nerves and irritate the temper. Fasting such as that ordained by God (v. 6) would have led to more virtuous living.

5. *Such a fast.* Their fasting was not of God's appointment, and therefore entirely unacceptable to Him. They fasted merely to gain favor with God and to secure His approval of their evil deeds, as if abstention from food was of more importance in God's sight than abstention from iniquity! See on Matt. 6:16.

6. *To loose the bands.* True fasting was designed to purify the motives and reform the life. But with the Jews the practices of religion had become a cloak for oppression of the weak, robbery of widows and orphans, and all forms of bribery, deceit, and injustice (Isa. 1:17, 23; Hosea 4:2; Amos 2:6; 3:10; 4:1; 5:11; 8:4–6; Micah 6:11, 12). The true purpose of religion is to release men from their burdens of sin, to eliminate intolerance and oppression, and to promote justice, liberty, and peace. God intended His people to be free, but the leaders of Israel were making slaves and paupers of them.

The heavy burdens. Literally, "the bonds of the yoke."

7. *Deal thy bread.* True religion is practical. To be sure, it includes the rites and ceremonies of the church, but it is in the life lived before one's fellows that the presence or absence of true religion is manifest. It is not so much a matter of abstaining from food as it is of sharing food with the hungry. Practical godliness is the only kind of religion recognized at the judgment bar of God (Matt. 25:34–46).

8. *Thy light.* See on ch. 60:1.

Thine health. What we contribute to the well-being of others reacts to our own good. Our own welfare is intimately related to that of our fellow men.

Thy rereward. Or, "thy rear guard" (cf. ch. 52:12). Compare Israel's experience in the wilderness (Ex. 14:19, 20). As we walk in ways of God's choosing we can be sure of His protecting presence.

9. *Then shalt thou call.* The promises of God are conditional upon obedience. Isaiah points out the difference between prayer God can answer, and worship that is not acceptable to Him (chs. 1:11–17; 58:2–4). Were God to shower favors upon those who do not approach Him in sincerity and truth, the result would be to confirm them in their evil ways.

If thou take away. By criticism, fault-finding, gossip, and innuendo, many professed Christians make the burdens of their fellows almost too heavy to bear. Many a noble

Christian has been crushed and sent to his grave in discouragement and defeat by having the finger of scorn pointed at him by a fellow Christian. God cannot draw near to His people while they are engaged in criticizing and oppressing their fellows.

10. Draw out thy soul. That is, take a personal interest in. If the church would live up to its opportunities and responsibilities, if its members would be Christians in spirit as well as in name, its task on earth would soon be completed and the Lord would return in glory. Lives of unselfish service for others shed abroad the light of the glory of God (see chs. 9:2; 60:1, 2).

11. The Lord shall guide. God cannot lead those who are stubborn, conceited, and self-centered. Christians who would be led by God must first put self aside and give themselves fully to the work of the Master. The Christian experience of many today is bleak and barren because of a lack of love for their fellow men.

In drought. In times of spiritual drought God promises to refresh those who have sought sincerely to be a blessing to their fellow men.

12. Old waste places. Or, “ancient ruins” (RSV). When, eventually, the Jews should return from captivity they would find Jerusalem in ruins. But the nation’s moral edifice also lay in ruins, and this must be rebuilt. Here is pictured a great work of revival, reformation, and restoration. A breach had been made in the wall, as it were, because of the failure to practice true religion (vs. 3–5). Nevertheless, the foundations remained, and upon them a new structure was to be reared. The manner of rebuilding the “old waste places” has been set forth in vs. 6–10; it consists of a revival of practical religion. The place where reformation is to begin is indicated in v. 13.

Paths to dwell in. That is, right courses of action. Ancient pathways once trodden by God’s people are to be restored (see Jer. 6:16). Right principles are to be honored and followed in all the relationships of life. All over the world the work of restoration is in progress. The Sabbath is being restored to its rightful place in the law of God and in the lives of men. Again men and women are being taught to walk in the ways of the Lord. They are being invited to enter the city of God and to take their place in the living temple that is being built (1 Cor. 3:9–11, 16; Eph. 2:20–22; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 Peter 2:4–9).

13. Turn away thy foot. The work of restoration is to begin with a revival of true Sabbath observance, the essence of which is communion with God and remembrance of His creative power, on the day that He made holy. The fate of Israel as a nation was determined by its attitude toward God’s holy day (see Jer. 17:24–27). The Sabbath was never intended to be an end in itself, but rather a means by which man might become acquainted with the character and purposes of his Creator (see on Ex. 20:8).

From doing. Note that the word “from” has been supplied by the translators. However, Dead Sea scroll 1QIs has “from,” as do also the LXX and the Syriac.

Thy pleasure. The essence of sin is selfishness—doing what one pleases, irrespective of God or man. The Sabbath day presents man with an opportunity to subdue selfishness and cultivate the habit of doing things that are pleasing to God (1 John 3:22) and that contribute to the well-being of others. Rightly understood and observed, the Sabbath is the key to man’s happiness both here and in the hereafter. True Sabbath observance will lead to the work of reformation pictured in Isa. 58:5–12. Those who do not enter into the spirit of the Sabbath as God ordained it, little realize what they are missing. The Sabbath is one of the greatest blessings bestowed upon men by a loving Creator.

A delight. The mere form of Sabbath observance is of little value. Those who think of the Sabbath as a burden have not discovered its true meaning and value.

The holy of the Lord. See on Gen. 2:1–3.

Honour him. Here is the acid test of what is right and proper on the Sabbath—does it honor God? Any activity entered into with the objective of learning more of the character, works, ways, and will of the Creator, or that is made a channel whereby His love may reach the hearts and lives of our fellow men, is indeed an honor to God.

14. Delight thyself. Those who make the Sabbath what God intended it to be, enter into a close fellowship with Him that others cannot know. Compare Ps. 40:8; see on Eze. 20:12, 20.

High places of the earth. Material as well as spiritual prosperity is promised those who enter wholeheartedly into the spirit of the Sabbath (see on Matt. 6:33).

The heritage of Jacob. For a summary of the various blessings that were included in “the heritage of Jacob,” see pp. 27, 28.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1–14CS 85; Ev 516; MM 123, 263; TM 126; 1T 355; 2T 35, 684; 6T 265, 289; 8T 159, 170; WM 29–34, 121, 221
- 1 CW 38, 174; Ev 195; GC 459; GW 304; LS 202; TM 89, 411; 1T 197, 216, 249; 2T 440, 608; 3T 258; 4T 517; 5T 211; 6T 17, 61; 8T 31, 159; 9T 243; WM 77
- 1, 2 GC 452; TM 296; 5T 299
- 1–32T 146
- 2 1T 257
- 3 2T 156
- 4 AA 413; 1T 257, 258
- 4–6DA 278
- 5–71T 256
- 5–112T 33
- 6 TM 481; 1T 258; 8T 218
- 6, 7 COL 210, 370; 2T 146, 156, 331; 3T 519; 6T 266; WM 270
- 6–92T 684; 8T 159
- 6–114T 60
- 7 CH 390; ChS 215; CS 161, 164; DA 369; GC 654; MH 147, 206; ML 240; 6T 85, 276, 282; WM 220, 306, 309
- 7, 8 COL 417; PK 718; 2T 29
- 7–11MB 122; MH 256
- 8 DA 350; FE 349; MH 100, 258; ML 246; 2T 36, 332; 4T 63; 6T 82, 267, 438; 7T 60, 120; WM 302
- 8–102T 35
- 8–11TM 126; 6T 306; WM 303
- 9–11ML 246; 2T 146
- 10 COL 371; DA 278, 369
- 10, 11 MH 100; PK 132, 327; 2T 685; 8T 134
- 10–128T 218
- 11 AA 340; 1T 592; 2T 29, 36, 669
- 11, 12 Ev 240
- 11–14MM 215

12 ML 224; PK 677; 5T 321; 6T 126; 7T 139; WM 32
12, 13 Ev 355; 1T 76
12–14GC 452; LS 96; PK 678; 3T 573; 6T 265, 352
13 CG 537; Ev 235; GC 447; 4ML 224; PP 307; 2T 584
13, 14 DA 289; 2T 702; 4T 114, 252; 8T 159
14 Ev 240; 6T 312

CHAPTER 59

1 *The damnable nature of sin.* 3 *The sins of the Jews.* 9 *Calamity is for sin.* 16 *Salvation is only of God.* 20 *The covenant of the Redeemer.*

1. The Lord's hand. Many in Israel attributed the difficulties that beset their nation to inability on the part of God to deliver them. They had come to conceive of Him as the heathen did of their gods; they thought of Jehovah as a local deity whose power was limited and who, it seemed, was not even able to protect Israel from the gods and armies of the nations about them. They blamed Him for their woes. The Lord now answers their cavils—the fault lies not with Him, but with them. God is still strong and good, His arm is still powerful, and His ear still attentive to the cries of His children. He can, and will, help when hindrances are removed.

His ear heavy. The difficulty was with Israel's spiritual perceptions, not with God's (see ch. 6:9, 10).

2. Your iniquities. Sin erects a barrier between man and God. If heaven seems far distant from earth, it is because sin has hung a veil of separation between man and God.

3. Your hands. Isaiah here repeats the accusation made in ch. 1:15. Although the Jews made a vigorous profession of religion, their words and works were consistently evil.

4. None calleth for justice. Literally, “none calls in righteousness.” The context makes it clear that Isaiah refers to the administration of justice. The thought is that when men enter suit at law they do so, not to achieve strict justice, but to secure the sanction of the courts for unjust and oppressive acts.

Pleadeth for truth. Literally, “pleads [his case] in truth,” that is, honestly. During the course of legal proceedings he takes unlawful advantage of his opponent (see Isa. 1:17, 23; Hosea 4:1, 2; Amos 2:6–8; 4:1; 5:11, 12; 8:4–6; Micah 3:11; 6:10–12; 7:2, 3).

5. Cockatrice' eggs. That is, “adders' eggs.” Leaders and people were constantly thinking evil thoughts that would hatch out into wicked deeds.

The spider's web. They wove nets of deceit to entice their fellows. The web of a spider does not appear to be an instrument of death, yet it is admirably adapted to entrap its prey.

That which is crushed. The apparent frustration of evil plans failed to avert the evil itself. The enemies of justice were still able to accomplish their objectives.

6. Their webs. A spider web is unsuitable for clothing, and he who presumes to clothe himself therewith merely reveals his shame and folly. Those who engage in weaving spiders' webs waste their time producing something that is not only utterly useless, but harmful.

7. Their feet run. The words “run” and “make haste” depict the eagerness and intensity with which these men engage in evil. Their conscience is not asleep; it is dead. Having completed one act of iniquity, they are impatient to engage in another. Compare Prov. 1:16; 6:17, 18; Micah 7:3.

Shed innocent blood. Manasseh “shed innocent blood very much” (2 Kings 21:16). God decreed that “whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Gen. 9:6). When Judah faced its doom, its leaders were given over to “covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence” (Jer. 22:17). One of the conditions upon which God promised to avert the doom of Jerusalem was that the people “oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood” (Jer. 7:6).

Thoughts of iniquity. In the days of Noah, God saw that “the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). Similarly, the schemes of evil men today bode ill for our generation (see on Matt. 24:37, 38).

Wasting and destruction. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs adds “and violence.” Evil thoughts beget evil deeds. Attempts to thwart evil when it reaches the stage of action are largely futile. The only effective way to prevent evil deeds is to transform the thoughts. It is this aspect of the law that Christ sets forth in the Sermon on the Mount (see on Matt. 5:17–22).

Their paths. That is, “their highways.” Travel was no longer safe.

8. *The way of peace.* Those who would enjoy peace must first think peaceful thoughts. Peace is the product of right thinking and right action (see ch. 32:17). God’s people enjoy peace (ch. 32:18) because they have peace in their hearts. Herein lies the remedy for the world’s distress and woe.

9. *Judgment.* That is, “justice.” In vs. 1–8 God has been addressing the people. Now they reply, admitting God’s charges against them.

Justice. Literally, “righteousness.”

Obscurity. Literally, “darkness.” Israel anticipated the fulfillment of the covenant promises (see pp. 27, 28) without meeting the covenant obligations. They expected to enjoy all its privileges without accepting its responsibilities. Accordingly, they reaped the curse for disobedience (see pp. 30–33). Israel had no regard for justice, honesty, kindness, and mercy, and God would not plead their cause against their oppressors. To their sorrow they discovered that the measure they had meted out to others was to be measured back to them (see on Matt. 7:2). They were reaping what they had sown. They cried to God for succor, but the heavens above them seemed as brass and the earth beneath them seemed as iron (Deut. 28:23).

10. *We grope.* Verses 10–15 present a striking description of the results of transgression. When men refuse to walk in the way of right and justice God permits blindness to come upon them (Isa. 6:10; cf. Rom. 11:25). He allows them to walk in pathways of their own devising, pathways that inevitably lead into distress and perplexity. Men find themselves shut in, as it were, by walls of trouble. Blindly and in vain they grope about, seeking a way of escape. This was the very outcome Moses had foretold. (Deut. 28:20, 29).

11. *We roar.* Distress produces various effects—sometimes anger and bitterness, sometimes anguish and distress (see on v. 9). “There is no peace ... to the wicked” (see on ch. 57:21).

12. *Our sins.* On behalf of the people of Judah, Isaiah now frankly acknowledges their transgressions (see on v. 9). They no longer endeavor to justify themselves. They have begun to collect the wages of sin (see Rom. 6:23; cf. James 1:15).

13. *Departing away.* Sin ever leads from God, never to Him. The path Israel was following led the nation further and further from the ideals God had set before them. The people, as it were (see on v. 12), here frankly admit their guilt (see on v. 9), and in so doing take the first step back to the Lord. The successive steps essential to reformation are explained in ch. 58:5–14. This was Israel’s only hope of averting further calamity.

14. *Judgment.* That is, “justice.” Isaiah here describes the sad state of affairs that prevailed in the courts of justice and in the private dealings of Jews with Jews. Justice is personified and pictured as having fled away for her own safety. She was fearful of venturing forth into the open.

Justice. Literally, “righteousness.” She too has been brushed aside, and is a fugitive from the haunts of men. Truth has been attacked, and lies like a fallen warrior, trampled underfoot and unable to rise. Equity and integrity have been banished, and dare not return. Such is the inevitable result when a nation turns its back on God and on divine law (see GC 584, 585).

15. *Maketh himself a prey.* With these words the section beginning with v. 9 closes. The times are so evil that an upright man finds his very life in danger. Such was the situation in Judah during the reign of Manasseh, who “shed innocent blood very much” (2 Kings 21:16).

The Lord saw it. These words begin a new section. The divine indictment of Judah (vs. 9–15) has been concluded. The Lord now surveys the seemingly hopeless condition of Judah and offers Himself as a Saviour and Intercessor (see on ch. 53:12). It is encouraging to know that when a situation appears dark and discouraging to man, the Lord not only knows all about it, but stands ready to take steps that will bring relief.

16. *There was no man.* In the crisis that had risen there was none able to provide relief (see Eze. 22:30). There was none to stay the threatened scourge, as did Aaron and Moses (Num. 16:47, 48), or Phinehas (Num. 25:7, 8). From a human point of view the situation appeared hopeless. Help must come from God, as it did in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and repeatedly throughout the wilderness wanderings and the occupation of the Promised Land. God would work for His own name’s sake and for the sake of His stricken people.

No intercessor. Or, “no one to intervene” (RSV), that is, on behalf of Israel. They were estranged from the heavenly Father, and in dire need of help (see on vs. 1, 2, 9).

His righteousness. It is divine mercy that moves the Omnipotent One to intervene in behalf of His beleaguered people. The crisis that confronted Judah in the days of Isaiah, and later, threatened the nation with utter extinction. But, as so often in the book of Isaiah, Inspiration draws from the more immediate crisis a lesson of the most profound import concerning the great conflict between good and evil. It is not only Judah that is involved, but all mankind. The utter helplessness of Judah before her enemies is here set forth as an example of the helplessness of the entire human race in its struggle against sin and the forces of evil. Without divine intervention man has no hope. Christ therefore offers Himself a ransom for many and enters upon the arduous pathway of conflict that will lead Him eventually to the cross.

17. *A breastplate.* Isaiah pictures Christ as an armed warrior entering into the struggle for man’s salvation. This is war, but the conflict is not fought with carnal weapons. The breastplate and helmet are weapons of defense designed to protect the head and the breast, the two most vulnerable parts of the body (see Eph. 6:14, 17).

Garments. Christ was to carry the battle to the gates of the enemies of His people.

Zeal. His zeal made Him fearless, and struck terror to the forces of evil (see Ps. 69:9; 119:139).

18. According to their deeds. In order to be just, judgment must be in proportion to guilt. When Christ returns, it will be to “give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12). The Lord “is slow to anger,” but the time comes when He will “take vengeance on his adversaries” and “will not at all acquit the wicked” (see on Nahum 1:2, 3).

The islands. That is, distant nations that have oppressed God’s people (see on ch. 42:4).

19. Fear the name. Like Egypt of old, the nations are all bound to respect the power and majesty of God when He rises in defense of His people (see on ch. 45:23). When God’s “judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (ch. 26:9).

God’s final manifestation of power in behalf of His people will cause all to acknowledge Him, from one end of the earth to the other (Ps. 50:1–6; Mal. 1:11; Rev. 5:13; 15:3, 4).

Come in like a flood. The consonantal Hebrew text may be translated as in the KJV or as in the RSV, “for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the Lord drives.” Hebrew syntax and verb form appear to favor the latter. *Ṣar*, translated “enemy” in the KJV, also means “distress,” or “dismay.” If *ṣar* is the subject of the verb of the sentence, it must be a noun—“enemy.” If it is a participle modifying the word “flood,” which its position in the sentence appears to favor, a literal rendering of the clause would be, “he shall come in like a distressing river.”

A standard. Heb. *nosesah*. If this verb is from *nasash*, the KJV reading follows; but if from *nu*, “to drive on,” or “to put to flight,” then the RSV reading should be taken, namely, “drives.” The marginal reading of the KJV, “put him to flight,” follows the more natural interpretation of the Masoretic text. Both translations are in harmony with the context. According to the KJV rendering, the people of God are in great distress (see vs. 9, 15), and He rises to deliver them (see vs. 15, 16). According to the alternate rendering, the last part of v. 19 continues the description of God overwhelming the enemies of His people, who are described in vs. 16–18. It is thus apparent that neither the context nor the Hebrew text itself can be pressed decisively in favor of either translation.

When the enemy comes in with seemingly irresistible force, and it appears that nothing can prevent him from pouring out his wrath on the righteous, God reveals His mighty power (v. 16). Again and again throughout history God has intervened in the most marvelous ways to deliver His people. Such will again be the experience of God’s people in the great crisis at the end of time. At the moment the wicked of earth think they have the saints completely within their power, the Lord will manifest Himself, destroying their enemies and taking the saints home with Him to receive their inheritance.

20. The Redeemer shall come. This prophecy will be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ. The Lord will then return to save His people—those who have turned from their transgressions and have accepted Him as their Saviour. In Rom. 11:26, 27 Paul applies similar words to the time when “all Israel shall be saved.”

21. My covenant. See on Gen. 17:4, 7, 8; Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 8:10, 11; 10:16.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1–21DA 458
1–151T 355
1 DA 751; TM 156; 5T 78, 323
1, 2 PK 323; 1T 596
8 CH 575; 2T 394
14 GC 586; TM 342; 9T 12, 62
14, 15 COL 170; DA 222; MH 142; 1T 362; 9T 91
14–17TM 358
16 PK 692; 8T 25
17 EW 36; LS 116; ML 314; TM 149; 8T 42
19 AH 214; CT 156, 166, 388; DA 828; EW 60, 222; GC 600; ML 28, 48, 316; PK 571;
1T 306; 2T 398; 4T 357; 5T 426, 629; 6T 161; 7T 238; 8T 95
19, 20 TM 359
10

CHAPTER 60

- 1 *The glory of the church in the abundant access of the Gentiles, 15 and the great blessings after a short affliction.*

1. Arise, shine. Isaiah here proceeds to describe a glorious work to be accomplished by Israel, on the assumption that a reformation, in harmony with ch. 58:6–14, has taken place. Chapters 60–62 describe this great work.

Such was the divine plan for ancient Israel. But as a nation they failed in the work of reformation within, and God was unable, therefore, to deliver them from their enemies without or to make them His agents in bringing salvation to the Gentiles (see pp. 26–30). Accordingly, the covenant privileges and responsibilities were transferred to spiritual Israel. Hence, the bright picture of the glorious triumph of the gospel outlined in chs. 60–62 clearly belongs to God’s people today (see pp. 35, 36).

Thy light. Light was ever a symbol of the divine presence (DA 464; see on Gen. 3:24). Christ came to earth as the light of life (John 1:4, 5; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35, 36, 46; see on Isa. 9:2). Those who received Him and believed on His name (John 1:9, 12) were, in turn, to let their light shine forth in glory to God (see on Matt. 5:14–16; 1 Peter 2:9). Before the return of Christ the gospel message is to be proclaimed with such power that the whole earth will be ablaze with the light of truth (Rev. 18:1).

2. Darkness. That is, spiritual darkness (see on ch. 9:2). Men have ever tended to love “darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). The world is dark with a misunderstanding of God and His love. Evil men cannot comprehend good in others. They fail to recognize the light of heaven when it shines upon them (John 1:5, 10, 11).

His glory. It is the reflected light of God’s glory that is to “be seen” upon God’s people. When men seek honor for themselves they eclipse the glory of God. When they are willing to efface self and to let God have first place in their hearts and in their lives

¹⁰Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 52:14). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

His glory can be seen in them. For the way in which the glory of God was to have been seen on ancient Israel see pp. 27–30.

3. *The Gentiles shall come.* The reflection of the divine character through Israel, together with the manifest blessing of Heaven upon them as a nation, was to have attracted the Gentiles and convinced them of the superiority of the worship and service of Jehovah (see pp. 28–30; cf. ch. 49:6, 22). In the providence of God this promise is to be fulfilled to the church in our day (see pp. 35, 36; see on v. 1).

And kings. The glory of God revealed in His people and church will attract not only the humble but the great men of earth. Even kings will be drawn to the light streaming forth from Zion (see chs. 49:23; 52:15).

4. *Lift up thine eyes.* God summons Israel to behold the glorious prospect depicted in vs. 1–3. The church today should raise its eyes from its usual round of activity in order to catch a glimpse of the hour of destiny soon to come, and having done so, set earnestly about the task of preparing for it.

Thy daughters. The last clause of v. 4 reads literally, “your daughters shall be tended at [your] side.”

5. *Flow together.* Heb. *nahar*, which also means “to beam [with joy].” The context favors this meaning.

Fear. Literally, “tremble,” that is, with joy (see Jer. 33:9). Israel would thrill at the realization of her glorious destiny. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs omits the word translated “fear.”

The abundance of the sea. An allusion to the international sea trade of Isaiah’s day, which brought wealth to those who engaged in it.

The forces. Heb. *chel*, “wealth.” Converted Gentiles would make generous contributions to advance and thus hasten the proclamation of the gospel (see p. 29).

6. *The multitude of camels.* The previous verse refers to “wealth” coming by sea. Here caravans, commerce by land, are pictured.

Midian. A region in the desert of Arabia (see on Ex. 2:15).

Ephah. A Midianite tribe (Gen. 25:4; 1 Chron. 1:33), and here the region they inhabited.

Sheba. Probably a reference to a region in southern Arabia (Gen. 10:7, 28). Compare the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon (1 Kings 10:1–10). In Matt. 12:42 she is called “the queen of the south.” The psalmist foretold a time when the kings of Sheba would offer gifts to Israel’s glorious king (Ps. 72:10, 11).

7. *Kedar.* Kedar and Nebaioth were sons of Ishmael who settled in the Arabian Desert (Gen. 25:13). The people of the regions here named were noted for their cattle and camels (Judges 6:5).

Acceptance on mine altar. The gifts of the Gentiles would be accepted by the Lord in token of the fact that He also accepted them personally. Isaiah again pictures a great ingathering of souls from foreign lands (see on v. 1).

8. *Fly as a cloud.* The figure changes, and the Gentiles gathering to Jerusalem are pictured as great flocks of birds.

9. *The isles.* That is, “the coastlands.” Distant peoples would acknowledge the message of God’s grace (see on ch. 42:4). Today multitudes in all parts of the earth wistfully look upward, anxiously longing for the hope and peace that only the gospel can bring to their troubled hearts.

Ships of Tarshish. Ships used in the metal trade (see on ch. 2:16). The psalmist foretold a time when “the kings of Tarshish and of the isles” would “bring presents” to Israel’s king (Ps. 72:10).

Their silver. In speaking of the coming of “the desire of all nations,” Haggai declared that all the silver and the gold belong to the Lord (Haggai 2:7, 8). The psalmist foresaw kings bringing their presents to the Temple (Ps. 68:29–31). See on Isa. 60:5. Men who are truly converted bring to God their richest treasures.

10. Sons of strangers. That is, Gentiles (see on ch. 56:6).

Build up thy walls. In ancient times city walls afforded protection and represented the strength of the city. Thus, to “build up” the walls of Zion meant to increase the strength of the city. The Gentiles would assist the Jews in the proclamation of the gospel.

I smote thee. A reference to the Babylonian captivity (see on ch. 54:7).

11. Open continually. City gates were closed at night as a safety measure. Gates open at night would thus imply peace and security. However, as here stated, the chief reason for leaving them open at night would be to accommodate the endless procession of Gentiles coming up to Jerusalem to present their gifts to the Lord in token of their love and devotion.

Forces. See on v. 5.

Brought. Or, “led in procession” (RSV). Gentile monarchs would approach Jerusalem in regal splendor, accompanied by their servants and courtiers (cf. Rev. 21:24).

12. The nation. “Those nations that rejected the worship and service of the true God were to be dispossessed. ... As the numbers of Israel increased they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world” (COL 290; see pp. 28–30). The failure of Israel to cooperate with God’s plan for them as a nation made impossible the fulfillment of this picture. In principle, however, it will be realized by the church today, in the glorious triumph of the gospel and the return of Jesus to this earth (see pp. 35, 36). Eventually the God of heaven will “set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed” and which will “break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms” (Dan. 2:44; cf. Dan. 7:27; Rev. 11:15).

13. The glory of Lebanon. Lebanon was noted for its beauty, particularly for its tall cedars. Cedars of Lebanon had been used in Solomon’s Temple (Kings 5:6–10), but Isaiah foresaw a new temple that would surpass it in glory. Ezekiel was given detailed instructions for the erection of this new temple, which, however, was never built (see Eze. 40 to 44).

The fir. For the trees here listed see on ch. 41:19.

Place of my feet. Zion is said to be the Lord’s “footstool” (1 Chron. 28:2; Ps. 99:5).

14. Come bending. That is, in voluntary submission the nations would acknowledge the infinite superiority of those who loved and served the true God (see pp. 28, 29). Compare ch. 62:4, 5, 7, 11.

15. Thou hast been forsaken. See on ch. 54:7, 8. Like a forsaken wife, Zion has become an object of scorn and reproach to all her neighbors (see Lam. 2:15). She would, however, be restored to her former position and again become the delight of the Lord (Isa. 62:4). Had Israel proved faithful to God, Jerusalem would have stood forever, the glorious metropolis of the earth (DA 577; GC 19).

16. The milk. Isaiah introduces another figure for the wealth and resources of the Gentiles, which would flow to Jerusalem in a steady stream (see on vs. 5–7, 11).

Compare chs. 49:23; 61:6; 66:12. Upon leaving Egypt the children of Israel were to receive gifts from their erstwhile masters (see on Ex. 3:22). Upon their return from Babylonian captivity the Jews received voluntary gifts of silver and gold from their neighbors and friends, and also from the royal treasury (Ezra 1:6; 7:15, 16, 21–23).

Thou shalt know. See on Eze. 6:7.

17. *For brass.* As gold was of far greater value than brass, and silver more precious than iron, so the Lord would increase the wealth of Israel (see p. 28). Anything they gave up in sacrifice for Him would eventually be amply repaid. Whatever we devote to the service of God will be repaid beyond our fondest expectations (see on Eccl. 11:1; Matt. 19:29).

Thy officers. The leaders of Israel would be men of “peace.” The word “peace” is no doubt here used in its broad sense of general well-being. The leaders of Israel would lead it on to success and prosperity.

Exactors. Heb. *nogēšim*, which in the plural, as here, means “authorities.”

Righteousness. Heb. *šedeq*, which sometimes means “success.” Governmental policy would be in harmony with divine principles, and therefore successful.

18. *Violence.* The thought of v. 17 is continued. Instead of oppression, brutality, and strife (see ch. 59:3–15), principles of brotherly love, benevolence, and mutual consideration would rule.

Thy walls Salvation. The presence and blessing of God will be Jerusalem’s best walls and bulwarks (see Zech. 2:5), and acclamations of praise and thanksgiving will replace gates and bars. See Isa. 26:1–3.

19. *No more.* The sun will not cease to exist when the earth is restored, but the city will no longer need it (Rev. 21:23; 22:5).

Everlasting light. All Hebrew words following this phrase up to and including the same words in v. 20 are missing in Dead Sea scroll 1QIs. This is a clear case of a frequently occurring scribal error, called homoeoteleuton. The eye of the scribe unwittingly switched from the first occurrence of this repeated phrase to the second, and thus missed all the words between. The Dead Sea scroll 1QIs has this passage.

20. *Thine everlasting light.* As long as man is in this world there is alternate sunshine and shadow, light and darkness, laughter and tears. But in the Holy City God will be the constant light and joy of His people. See on v. 1.

Thy mourning. See on ch. 59:9–11.

21. *All righteous.* Righteousness is the personal goal for each of God’s people. In the new earth the ideal of Ps. 15; 24:3–5 will be realized. It will be a world “wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13), because all its inhabitants are righteous. Sorrow will be no more, because there is no more sin (see Rev. 21:27). Compare also Isa. 52:1; Zech. 14:16.

Inherit the land. The promises made to the fathers will be fulfilled in due time (see Gen. 12:7; Dan. 7:18; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:3, 4, 7).

The branch. The “men of Judah” were God’s “pleasant plant” (Isa. 5:2, 7; cf. Isa. 29:23; Eph. 2:10). His likeness is imparted to His people, and His law is placed within their hearts (Jer. 31:33, 34). Gradually they are to grow up into His likeness and “be like him” (1 John 3:2; cf. Eph. 4:15). The Hebrew word *nešer*, “branch,” “sprout,” “shoot,” is omitted in the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs.

22. A little one. Meaning, “an insignificant person.”

Become a thousand. That is, “become [a group, or clan, numbering] a thousand.”

Compare ch. 54:1–3. Christ compared the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed that became a great tree (Mark 4:31, 32).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 CE 30; CM 17; COL 420; Ev 36, 693; GW 470; MB 43; PK 717, 720; TM 156, 205; 6T 23, 29, 368, 414, 434; 7T 62; 8T 35, 116, 168; WM 22
- 1, 2 COL 415; TM 42, 152; 8T 10; WM 271
- 1–3TM 458; 9T 70
- 1–4PK 375
- 1–5GW 28
- 2 EW 104; FE 177, 201, 238; LS 295; PK 188, 687, 718; 5T 99, 528, 547
- 3 DA 34
- 10 AA 595
- 10, 11 PK 375
- 13 1T 69
- 15 AA 601; PK 723; 8T 39
- 16 PK 724
- 18 Ed 182; GC 675
- 18–21PK 730
- 19 SC 68
- 21 Ed 302

CHAPTER 61

1 *The office of Christ. 4 The forwardness, 7 and blessings of the faithful.*

1. The Spirit. This is one of the most striking chapters of the book of Isaiah. For every Christian this is clearly a Messianic prophecy, one that Jesus applied to Himself in His home town of Nazareth (see on Luke 4:16–21). The speaker is Christ, in His role as God’s Servant (see on Isa. 41:8). The subject matter of ch. 61 is closely related to that of ch. 60 (compare ch. 61:3 with ch. 60:9, 15, 18, 20, 21).

Ancient Jewish expositors recognized the Messianic import of this and many other passages in Isaiah. Verses 1–3 present a graphic picture of what the Messiah was to have accomplished for His people Israel as individuals and as a nation. Because of their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah (see pp. 30–33), however, the nation as such forfeited the ministry and favor of Messiah.

Anointed me. Heb. *mashach*, from which is derived the noun *mashiach*, “anointed one,” or “Messiah” (see on Ps. 2:2; Matt. 1:1; Luke 4:18). *Mashach* might thus appropriately be translated, “made me Messiah.” At the ceremony of anointing, an individual was set apart for some particular office or mission. Aaron was anointed by Moses to be high priest (Ex. 40:13). Both Saul and David were anointed by Samuel (1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13). Elijah was to anoint Jehu as king and Elisha as prophet (1 Kings 19:16). Christ was to be anointed by God the Father (Ps. 45:7) through the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38) at the time of His baptism (Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21, 22).

To preach. The great work of Christ on earth was to proclaim the “good tidings,” or “good news,” of salvation (see on Mark 1:1). After His anointing, Jesus went about from

place to place preaching His message of forgiveness and acceptance with God (Luke 4:14, 15, 21, 31, 43, 44; 5:32; 6:20; 8:1; etc.).

The meek. Following the LXX, NT writers read “the poor” (see on Luke 4:18; cf. Matt. 11:5). Christ’s message was for the poor and the meek in spirit (Matt. 5:3, 5). Jesus Himself was “meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29), and those who came to Him were to become like Him (see 1 John 3:1–3).

To bind up. Jesus came to assuage the suffering of those who are grieved and weary of their burden of sin (see on Matt. 5:3; Matt. 11:28–30; Luke 4:18). Christ is the Great Physician, who came to heal the hearts and souls of men.

To proclaim liberty. Men who yield to sin become its captives and slaves (John 8:34; Rom. 6:16). Christ came to free men from the bondage of evil and to make them free in Him (John 8:36; Rom. 6:1–23; 8:2, 15, 21). The phrase itself and the thought it expresses are taken from the proclamation made in the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:10; Jer. 34:8; Eze. 46:17). See on Luke 4:18.

Opening of the prison. Literally, “restoring the sight,” as in the LXX, or, “recovering of sight,” as in Luke 4:18. The Hebrew verb *paqach* is never used in the sense of opening a door, but exclusively of the restoring of sight to the blind and of hearing to the deaf (Isa. 35:5; 42:7; etc.). In ch. 42:1, 7, the Lord’s Servant—Messiah—was to do the very work here foretold.

2. The acceptable year. Literally, “the year of the favor [shown by God to men].” This refers to the manifestation of God’s saving grace as seen in the life and ministry of our Saviour (see on Luke 4:19).

The day of vengeance. The contrast is between “favor” for those who accept Messiah and “vengeance” upon those who reject Him. In the synagogue at Nazareth Christ ended His reading of Isaiah with the words preceding this clause (see on Luke 4:18). Jerusalem was indeed to see “days of vengeance” (Luke 21:22), but only because the Jews rejected Christ and His message of salvation (Matt. 21:43, 44; 23:36–38). The destruction of Jerusalem was a type of the great, final day of vengeance (see on Matt. 24:3).

All that mourn. That is, for their own sins (see on Matt. 5:4) and the sins of others (Ps. 119:53, 136; Jer. 13:17; Eze. 9:4; 2 Cor. 2:1; 12:21; 2 Peter 2:8).

3. Mourn. See on v. 2.

Beauty. Literally, “headdress,” “coronet,” or “garland,” such as that worn by a bridegroom or a victor in battle. A coronet of joy was to take the place of the ashes that had been sprinkled upon the head in token of penitence and grief (see ch. 58:5).

Oil of joy. Compare Ps. 45:7, where a similar phrase is used of Christ. In times of mourning and fasting the Hebrews refrained from the use of anointing oils (Dan. 10:3; cf. Matt. 6:17). Now every indication of sorrow was to be put away, and God’s people were to bedeck themselves as for an occasion of festivity and joy. Their garments of mourning were to be replaced by those used for gala occasions (see Zech. 3:3–5; cf. Luke 15:22).

Spirit of heaviness. Or, as we would say today, “disheartened spirit.”

Trees of righteousness. In the OT, trees are often used figuratively of people (see on Ps. 1:3); here, of God’s ransomed ones. They would be righteous because they had put on His likeness and been re-created in His image (see on Isa. 60:1).

The planting. See on ch. 60:21.

Might be glorified. God is honored when His children bear the fruits of righteousness and reveal in their lives His own traits of character (John 15:8; Gal. 5:22, 23).

4. Build the old wastes. See on ch. 58:12.

5. Strangers. That is, Gentiles (see on ch. 56:6). Those who had once been enemies of Israel would become friends. Those who had once laid the land waste would cooperate with Israel in its restoration. Compare ch. 14:1, 2. Israel would lead out in the work, and their Gentile converts would assist (see on chs. 14:1, 2; 56:6–8; 60:3–10).

6. Priests. The sons of Aaron were dedicated to the service of the Lord (Ex. 40:13–15). Isaiah here foretells the ministry of all of God’s people, as a “kingdom of priests,” in the great task of bringing the Gentiles to a knowledge of the true God (Ex. 19:6; 1 Peter 2:5–9; see pp. 28–30).

Riches. Heb. *chel*, the same word translated “forces” in ch. 60:5 (see comment there; see also Rom. 15:27; 1 Cor. 9:11).

In their glory. Or, “in their riches” (RSV). The riches of the Gentiles bring honor to the cause of God (see on Isa. 60:5, 6, 16; Rev. 21:24).

7. Double. After Job’s affliction God rewarded him with twice as much as he had had before (Job 42:10). God’s people had suffered, it seemed to them, twice as much as they deserved, but God would amply reward them (see Isa. 40:2; Zech. 9:12; cf. Jer. 16:18; Rev. 18:6).

Confusion. Instead of confusion and reproach, God would give them joy. The tables would be turned. Whereas they had once been oppressed and despised, they would now be honored and exalted. In vs. 7–9 Isaiah speaks of Israel, rather than to Israel, as in vs. 5, 6.

8. I hate robbery. Isaiah here seems to return to the thought of ch. 1:11–17. God respects justice, mercy, and love (Ps. 11:7; Micah 6:8), but rejects utterly the mere form of worship (see on Isa. 1:11; 2 Tim. 3:5; cf. John 4:23, 24). None but those who have “clean hands, and a pure heart,” who walk uprightly, work righteousness, and speak the truth in their hearts, will “dwell” in His “holy hill” (Ps. 24:3–5; 15:1–5; see on Matt. 7:21–27).

Work. Heb. *pe‘ullah*, literally, “a reward [for work performed].” Compare Lev. 19:13 and Eze. 29:20, where the same word is used, and where recompense for labor is clearly implied by the context. God will grant reward in strict accord with merit (see on Matt. 20:1–16).

Covenant. See on Isa. 55:3; Jer. 31:31, 33.

9. Their seed. That is, “their posterity.”

Known. That is, known well and favorably (see Ps. 76:1; Prov. 31:23). Men will recognize that God’s people are especially blessed and favored by Heaven (see Deut. 4:6–8; 28:10; pp. 28, 29).

The Gentiles. Literally, “the nations” (see pp. 28–30).

10. Greatly rejoice. Zion returns thanksgiving and praise to God for the wonderful favors bestowed upon her. God has graciously removed her shame and made her to appear glorious in the eyes of the world (chs. 49:13–23; 54:1–8; see on chs. 54:5–7; 61:7).

Garments of salvation. These “garments” represent the perfect character of Christ (4T 88) that His people are to wear, even in this life (COL 319; see on Matt. 22:1–14). They stand in sharp contrast with our own “filthy rags” (see on Isa. 64:6).

Ornaments. From the same word translated “beauty” in v. 3 (see comment there).

As a bride. See on ch. 49:18.

11. Her bud. Sin has made the earth desolate and waste, but it will not always remain so. The gospel of God's grace will cause the desert places to spring into bloom and to bear fruits of righteousness to the glory of God (see on Isa. 61:3; Gal. 5:22, 23). Compare Isaiah's parable of the vineyard (see ch. 5:1–7; cf. chs. 32:15, 16; 35:1, 2; 41:18, 19; 43:19–21; 44:3, 4; 55:12, 13).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–11DA 458

1 GW 49; ML 118; Te 287; 6T 54, 225; 9T 107, 202

1, 2 DA 34, 217, 237; MH 35, 423; PK 689; 7T 138

1–3AA 224; FE 371

1–4CH 530

2 DA 240

3 AH 17; COL 214; DA 301; GC 650; PK 724; SC 67; 6T 86; 7T 22; 8T 42, 243; 9T 287

4 MH 406; PK 677; 6T 126

6–9MH 406

8 FE 353; GW 450; MM 125; Te 232; 7T 179

10 COL 206; PK 668; 2T 453; 5T 472, 510; 8T 42 9T 114, 182

11 COL 63; Ed 104; GC 301; GW 29; MH 406; PK 733; PP 342; 6T 419

CHAPTER 62

1 *The fervent desire of the prophet to confirm the church in God's promises. 5 The office of the ministers (unto which they are incited) in preaching the gospel, 10 and preparing the people thereto.*

1. For Zion's sake. This chapter continues the theme of ch. 61, without interruption—the glorious future of Israel as God's chosen messenger of truth to the world, on condition that she remain faithful to Him (see pp. 26–30). Israel failed to live up to her exalted privileges, therefore the promises must find their fulfillment in the church today (see pp. 35, 36). Christ is still the speaker, as in ch. 61:1, and tells what He will do in behalf of Zion (see on Ps. 48:2). Zion was a poetic name for Jerusalem.

I will not rest. Christ pledges Himself not to cease working in behalf of His people until His eternal purpose for them shall have been accomplished (see on ch. 42:4).

2. Gentiles shall see. See on ch. 60:3–5.

A new name. Anciently, a new name was given—or assumed, as the case might be—to commemorate an event of major significance (Gen. 17:5; 32:28; Ruth 1:20; cf. Hosea 1:6, 9; 2:1). Here God's people receive a new name appropriate to their new experience, to the glorious state to which they, as a nation, have attained. Concerning the nature of their new name see Isa. 62:4, 12. Compare Rev. 2:17; 3:12; 19:12.

3. A crown of glory. In the day when God's glorious purpose for Israel becomes a reality, His name will be honored as all men see the unparalleled success and prosperity with which He has blessed them (see pp. 28–30). God intends that the church today shall likewise become an instrument of praise and beauty in His hand (see pp. 35, 36).

4. Forsaken. See on chs. 49:14; 54:6, 7.

Hephzi-bah. Literally, “my delight is in her.” This name betokened restoration to divine favor. Hephzibah was the name of Hezekiah's wife (2 Kings 21:1), as Azubah, “forsaken,” was of Jehoshaphat's mother (2 Chron. 20:31).

Beulah. Literally, “possessed,” or “married” (see Eze. 16:8). She who had been in a state of widowhood and desolation would become the honored wife of King Messiah!

Compare Hosea's child, whose name was changed from Loammi, "not my people," to Ammi, "my people" (Hosea 1:9, 10; 2:1).

5. As a young man. The marriage relationship is often used in the Bible to represent the covenant relationship between God and His people (see Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14; Eze. 16:8–14; Hosea 2:19; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23, 27; Rev. 19:7; 21:2). As a bride brings joy to her husband, so the church brings joy to the heart of God. He will care for them as a faithful husband provides for and protects his beloved bride.

6. Watchmen. It is the duty of the watchmen on the walls of Zion to guard its people against danger. In the ancient Orient danger constantly threatened, and it was necessary for watchmen to be ever on the alert. Every spiritual leader is a watchman, whose duty it is to stand guard upon the walls of Zion. See on ch. 21:11.

Day nor night. The work of a faithful minister is never done (see 2 Tim. 4:2). When others sleep he must remain on guard. When others are weary he must have courage and strength. He must be vigilant, industrious, unselfish, and alert, for on his fidelity depends the safety of the church. If he sleeps or falters, the enemy may gain a victory, and souls may be lost.

Make mention of the Lord. Literally, "causing to remember the Lord." The spiritual watchman is accountable not only to his flock but also to God. He must at all times keep close to God, look to Him for counsel, and depend upon Him for strength. Day by day it is his task to present before the Lord the needs of his people and to make certain that their needs will be supplied. For Christ's personal example see on Isa. 50:4; Mark 3:13; Luke 2:49.

7. Give him no rest. God's servants are neither to take rest themselves nor, as it were, to give God rest till His purpose for them is accomplished. They are to take a deep personal interest in their work, not as hirelings (see on John 10:12, 13), but as men who must give an account (see on Heb. 13:17). Compare Christ's lesson in the parable of the importunate widow (Luke 18:1–8).

Till he establish. See on v. 1.

8. Lord hath sworn. Upon taking an oath a man was to raise his right arm in solemn affirmation of his truthfulness and sincerity (Deut. 32:40; Eze. 20:5, 15). Because Israel had sinned, God withdrew His protecting care and allowed their enemies to triumph over them and to despoil the land (see on Isa. 59:1–15). Henceforth, He would defend them against their foes (see on vs. 15–20). God would supply their necessities and bless them abundantly (see pp. 27, 28).

9. Courts of my holiness. That is, in the sanctuary. The Levitical law provided for peace offerings and first fruits to be brought to the Temple in thankful acknowledgment of the blessings of Heaven (Deut. 12:5–18; 14:23). If the people had always continued to be grateful and faithful to God, their blessings would have continued and their enemies would not have triumphed over them (see on Rom. 1:21).

10. Go through the gates. Isaiah refers prophetically to the coming of Messiah (see on ch. 40:3–5). All obstructions are to be removed; everything that might give offense is to be put aside.

Prepare ye. See on chs. 40:3; 57:14.

Cast up. See on ch. 57:14.

Lift up a standard. That is, a "flag," or "ensign." A flag stands for authority and challenges men to be loyal to that authority. God's law is a spiritual ensign. Similarly, the

Scriptures as a whole bear the stamp of Heaven and call for loyal obedience. It is the solemn duty of God's spiritual watchmen to lift high the standard of truth God has entrusted to them.

11. End of the world. That is, to its farthest extremity. The message of salvation is to go to the most distant parts of earth. For the manner in which this work was to have been accomplished anciently by literal Israel, had they been faithful, see pp. 27–30. In our day, it is the great task of the church to work together with God for the fulfillment of these glorious promises (see pp. 35, 36).

Thy salvation cometh. At His first coming Christ offered salvation to the daughter of Zion (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5–9; John 12:15), but at His second coming He will reward His people, each according to his works (Isa. 40:10; Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12).

Work. Heb. *pe'ullah*, “recompense,” or “reward [for labor performed]” (see on ch. 61:8).

12. The holy people. Christ transforms His people into a “glorious church,” “holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:26, 27). When probation closes, Christ's work of sanctification in behalf of His people will have been completed, and those who are holy will forever remain “holy still” (Rev. 22:11).

Redeemed of the Lord. It is Christ who redeems, or ransoms, His people, a thought Isaiah frequently stresses. In ch. 35:8, 10 he speaks of a “way of holiness” over which “the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion.” In ch. 43:1 he comforts Israel with the thought that He who created her is the One who redeemed her, and in ch. 51:10, 11 he declares that the redeemed will “come with singing unto Zion.” See also chs. 44:6, 23; 52:3.

A city not forsaken. See on v. 4. Zion had sinned, and because of her sins the Lord had allowed judgments to fall upon her. She thought herself forsaken and forgotten by the Lord (chs. 49:14; 54:6, 7), but Isaiah brings a message of comfort and reassurance (see on ch. 40:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 AA 571; CE 32; CM 38; CT 398, 548; CW 15; Ev 70, 87, 425, 578; FE 532; LS 394; TM 459; 4T 595; 6T 253, 481; 7T 54, 138; 8T 90, 211; 9T 64, 140
- 3 GC 676
- 4 DA 103
- 4, 5 DA 151; GC 302; PK 733
- 5 COL 207
- 6 CE 8; 1T 469; 2T 706; 4T 402, 527; 5T 263, 530; 8T 195, 248, 304; 9T 29
- 10–128T 253
- 12 COL 180; GC 650; PK 724

CHAPTER 63

1 *Christ sheweth who he is, 2 what his victory over his enemies, 7 and what his mercy toward his church. 10 In his just wrath he remembereth his free mercy. 15 The church in their prayer, 17 and complaint, profess their faith.*

1. Edom. Edom here stands for the enemies of God and His people (see on ch. 34:5). The Edomites were descendants of Esau (Gen. 25:30), the twin brother of Jacob (Gen. 25:24–26). They had taken an attitude of persistent hostility toward Israel (see Gen. 27:41; Num. 20:14–21). Later, during the reign of Ahaz, in Isaiah's day, the Edomites had raided Judah and had carried away captives (2 Chron. 28:17). In Amos 1:6–11 Edom

is accused of associating itself with Gaza and Tyre in inhuman treatment of captives. In Isa. 63:1–6 the prophet discusses Messiah’s victory over all opposition.

Dyed. Heb. *chamuš*, from a root meaning “to be leavened,” “to be sour,” and thought to mean garments of a dazzling color. The LXX reads “red.”

Bozrah. An important city of Edom about 24 mi. (38.5 km.) south by east from the Dead Sea. Isaiah has already mentioned “a sacrifice in Bozrah” (see on ch. 34:5, 6).

To save. Isaiah points out the dual nature of the work Messiah was to do. He would reveal Himself “in the greatness of his strength” to destroy His enemies, but “mighty to save” His children.

2. Winefat. Heb. *gath*, “wine press.” In ancient times grapes were placed in large vats, where men stamped upon them, thus treading out the juice. The garments of such men became stained red with the juice. The same figure is employed by John (Rev. 14:19, 20; 19:15).

3. Winepress. Heb. *purah*, more particularly the trough of the wine press. Poetically *purah* is synonymous with *gath* (v. 2).

Alone. Or, “by himself.” When the Messiah came He went through His bitter agony in Gethsemane alone. His disciples, who should have comforted Him, had fallen asleep (Matt. 26:36–45). His humanity shrank from the terrible ordeal He was about to pass through. Beholding the impending fate of a doomed world, He accepted “His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life” (DA 693). On the cross, enshrouded by the supernatural darkness, He felt even more alone (Matt. 27:46; DA 754).

For. Better, “and.” On the nature of divine anger see on 2 Kings 13:3. Messiah would gladly have brought salvation to all. But they refused the divine offer and thereby chose death (see GC 36, 37).

4. The day. See on chs. 34:2–10; 35:4.

The year. Compare ch. 34:8. The time when the wicked will be destroyed is the time when the righteous will be saved.

5. None to help. Literally, “no helper.” Instead, the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “no man.”

Wondered. Heb. *shamam*, translated “astonished” in Dan. 8:27. The figure here employed heightens the desperateness of the situation. Messiah took notice of the pitiful situation in which man found himself and determined personally to rescue him from his desperate plight.

Mine own arm. See on chs. 40:10; 51:9; 52:10.

Fury. Heb. *chemah*, a common OT word used 81 times to describe divine indignation. On the nature of God’s wrath see on 2 Kings 13:3.

6. Tread down. The wicked are represented as grapes to be trodden in the wine press of God’s wrath.

Make them drunk. The nations are often represented as drinking a cup of fury that is poured out by the Lord (Job 21:20; Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 14:10).

7. I will mention. This verse begins a new section, which extends to the end of ch. 64. The section constitutes a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Zion remembers the loving-kindness and tender mercies of God that have been extended in spite of Israel’s

ungratefulness and rebellion. This poem opens with a statement of determination to think upon the kindness and goodness of God and to make His mercies known to others (cf. Ps. 89).

8. *For he said.* Doubtless a reference to the time when God intervened to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage.

Lie. Heb. *shaqar*, “to deceive,” “to deal falsely.” Surely, it seems to us today Israel would keep God’s covenant. It hardly appeared likely that anyone would be so foolish as to break the terms of such a covenant and thus forfeit the promised blessings. Compare Zeph. 3:7, where a similar assurance was expressed regarding the conduct of Israel, but where again they were disobedient.

Saviour. Heb. *Moshia’*, from the root *yasha’*, “to help,” “to save,” the root from which the name Jesus is derived (see on Matt. 1:21). Christ was the Saviour of His people in OT times as well as in NT times (see PP 366). In spite of Israel’s repeated transgressions, Christ intervened again and again on their behalf.

9. *He was afflicted.* Literally, “He was not an adversary,” or, “He did not afflict.” The reading, “He was afflicted,” is based on a number of Hebrew manuscripts and on the Masoretic tradition. As a kind, loving parent suffers when suffering comes upon his children, so does God. The Lord saw the affliction of His people in Egypt (Ex. 3:16) and saved them when they cried to Him in their oppression. Today He is our great high priest, who is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15).

The angel of his presence. This was the angel in whom God’s presence dwelt (Ex. 14:19, 24; 23:20–23; 32:34; 33:14, 15; Deut. 1:32, 33), and was none other than Christ Himself (see PP 366). It was Christ who was ever with His people, guiding them by day, protecting them by night, and leading them on to the Promised Land against all enemy opposition. When the tabernacle was set up, Christ manifested His presence in the holy Shekinah, above the mercy seat and between the cherubim (Num. 7:89).

Bare. Heb. *naṭal*, “to lift,” “to pick up.” Christ is here pictured as a father, tenderly caring for His beloved children (see Ex. 19:4; Deut. 1:31; 32:11, 12; 33:27; Isa. 46:4).

10. *But they rebelled.* The faithlessness of Israel is placed in striking contrast with the loving-kindness and faithfulness of God (see Ps. 106).

Vexed his holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was known and was active in OT times as well as in NT times. Paul admonished the church to “grieve not the holy Spirit” (Eph. 4:30). In the days of Noah, God had said that His Spirit would “not always strive with man” (Gen. 6:3). The murmurings and complaints of Israel in the wilderness were directed not so much against Moses as against God (Ex. 16:8, 9).

Their enemy. That is, He appeared to be their enemy. Actually the judgments that befell the people had a merciful design. God was seeking the ultimate salvation of the individual.

11. *Then he remembered.* It is not entirely clear to whom the “he” refers. Some think it is God who recollects what He had done in the days of old, and who determines to repeat His glorious acts. Others think it is the people who recall the glories of the past.

Where is he? It is the people who are speaking. This becomes clear when the reading of the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs, the LXX, and the Syriac is adopted, “Where is the one having brought up from the sea the shepherds of his flock?” For “shepherds” several

manuscripts and the LXX support the reading, “shepherd.” The singular would refer to Moses, the plural probably to Moses, Aaron, and other prominent leaders.

Within him. The reference is either to Moses with his special spiritual gift (Num. 12:1–8), or to the people (Neh. 9:20).

12. The right hand. This hand was regarded as the hand of strength and of action (see Ps. 20:6).

His glorious arm. Compare chs. 40:10; 53:1. This was the arm by which God had wrought such mighty acts for the deliverance of His people from Egypt (Ex. 6:6; 15:6, 12; Deut. 4:34; 7:8).

Dividing the water. The reference is to the miraculous parting of the waters of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:21; Ps. 106:9).

An everlasting name. The fame of Jehovah’s name had spread throughout the ancient East because of His mighty deeds in delivering the people from their Egyptian bondage (see Joshua 2:10; 2 Sam. 7:23).

13. Through the deep. That is, through the waters of the Red Sea (see Ps. 106:9).

As an horse. In an area normally covered by water, the Hebrews made their way as easily as a horse would cross a wide, even plain, without tripping.

14. As a beast. Literally, “as cattle.” As a herd of cattle is brought into a quiet, fertile valley where it can find rich pasturage and refreshing rest after a long, hard journey, so the children of Israel after their 40 years of wandering were brought into the land of Canaan, their promised home.

15. Look down. This is a prayer to God for help. In ancient times God had wonderfully guided and blessed His people. Had He now forgotten them? Where now are the zeal and strength that in former times were so gloriously manifested in behalf of His children?

Thy bowels. The bowels were regarded as the seat of emotion and compassion (see Gen. 43:30; 1 Kings 3:26; Isa. 16:11; Jer. 4:19; Lam. 1:20).

16. Doubtless. Heb. *ki*, “for.” Inasmuch as God was the Father of Israel, the people could look to Him for help and guidance. The ground of their appeal was that God as their Father would feel a responsibility toward them and that His heart would really yearn for them. Abraham, their earthly father, was dead and was in no position to help them, but that was not the case with God.

Our father. Compare 1 Chron. 29:10; Isa. 64:8 for other uses of “our father” in OT prayer. On the fatherhood of God see Deut. 32:6; Jer. 3:4; Mal. 1:6; 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Gal. 4:4–6; Eph. 4:6.

Our redeemer. The last sentence may be translated, “Our redeemer is thy name from of old.” From ancient times, God was known to His people as the one who broke their bonds (Jer. 2:20) and redeemed them.

17. Made us to err. In the nontechnical language of the Bible, God is often represented as doing that which He does not prevent (see on 1 Sam. 16:14; 2 Chron. 18:18). The question may be understood permissively, “O Lord, why have you permitted us to err?” etc. Since God never coerces the will, He does not prevent men from following the evil course of their choosing. In one sense of the word men actually do not have God’s permission to do evil. They have God’s permission to do right (Deut. 30:19), but because they are free moral agents God does not prevent them from following the way of evil if they so choose. We would hardly say of our children, if some of them grow

up and leave the path of rectitude, that they have our permission to do evil. Because of their maturity we simply no longer interfere with their choice.

The request in the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," should be similarly understood. God does not tempt men to sin (James 1:13), but permits trial only if it is for our good (see on Matt. 6:13). The words are a figurative way of requesting that we may not fall into evil.

Hardened. See on Ex. 4:21.

Return. Compare Ps. 80:14; 90:13.

18. A little while. To Abraham the promise was given that the land of Canaan would be given to him and to his seed for an eternal inheritance (Gen. 13:14, 15; 17:8). In comparison with eternity the time from Joshua to Isaiah was but "a little while." God's promises are conditional. Because of their wickedness the Jews forfeited the promises made to Abraham.

Trodden down thy sanctuary. At the time of Isaiah the Assyrians had overrun most of the Holy Land (chs. 36–38), although they abandoned the attempt to take Judah. A century later the Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar, put an end to the nation of Judah and destroyed Jerusalem, together with its Temple and walls (2 Kings 25:8–16). The Temple was still standing when Isaiah spoke these words. However, he was looking forward prophetically to the time when the Temple would be no more (see ch. 64:11; see Vol. I, pp. 27, 28).

19. We are thine. "Thine" is supplied. It is possible to translate the passage, "We are as those over whom thou hast never ruled, as those upon whom thy name has not been called." The basis of Israel's plea is that they had sunk to the level of the heathen, who had never acknowledged God. Was that right? Should God allow the children of Abraham, those who had acknowledged Him as their Father (v. 16), to be in the same condition as others whom He had never recognized? Isaiah's confession on behalf of the people (see on ch. 59:12, 13) here reaches its lowest depth of anguish. They feel themselves to be deeply humiliated in that God has seemingly rejected them, and they beg humbly that they may not be cast off utterly. It is this spirit of utter dejection and despair that causes them to lift up their eyes to Heaven in the prayer that opens the following chapter. For the background of this situation see on ch. 40:1.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 CT 262

3 DA 693, 746, 754; SR 222

7 MYP 424

9 CH 455; DA 356; Ed 263; MB 13; PK 312, 545; PP 407; 5T 195

10 PK 576

CHAPTER 64

1 *The church prayeth for the illustration of God's power. 5 Celebrating God's mercy, it maketh confession of their natural corruptions. 9 It complaineth of their affliction.*

1. Wouldest rend the heavens. Chapter 64 continues the prayer begun in ch. 63:15. The chapter division here is unfortunate, for it tends to blur the continuity. In the Hebrew text the division occurs at the end of v. 1. On behalf of the people Isaiah calls upon the Lord to manifest Himself in their behalf (see on ch. 63:19). The background of the prayer is the picture earlier presented. The sanctuary is desolate and the people are in a strange land (see on ch. 63:18).

Might flow down. Heb. *zalat*, which, in the form here found, means “to quake.”

2. As when the melting fire burneth. Literally, “as fire kindles brushwood.” The picture seems to be that the mountains would be unable to resist the descent of Jehovah even as dry, inflammable brushwood is unable to avoid being ignited when brought into contact with fire, or as water is unable to resist boiling when heated over a fire.

3. Terrible things. Compare 2 Sam. 7:23; Ps. 18:7–15; 65:5; 68:8; 145:6. Israel asked God to do again what He had done in former times.

Flowed down. Heb. *zalat*, “quaked,” as in v. 1.

4. O God. Better, “a God.” The objective case seems to be required by the context rather than the vocative. The forms are identical in the Hebrew. The passage may be literally translated, “From of old they have not heard, they have not perceived with the ear, eye hath not seen a God beside thee who works for the one waiting for him.” Compare the translation of the ASV as quoted in MH 425. The willingness of God to intervene in crises is here extolled. No other god works for his devotees as does the living God. The reference is not to the unspeakable glories of the future world, though the words as they are quoted in 1 Cor. 2:9 have been applied in that way (see GC 675), as well as to the present (see PP 602; DA 412). The LXX shows slight variations: “From of old we have not heard, neither have our eyes seen a God beside thee, and thy works which thou wilt perform to them that wait for mercy.” Paul’s quotation also reveals some differences. The NT passage may be translated literally, “The things which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and upon the heart of man has not come, all of which God has prepared for those loving him.” Paul’s emphasis is upon spiritual understanding. He calls attention to the reason why the “princes of this world” “crucified the Lord of glory.” They did not possess the spiritual understanding that would have caused them to comprehend “the wisdom of God.” Spiritual things are to be “spiritually discerned.” What the natural senses have not perceived without God, God has revealed by His Spirit to those who love Him. To men who possess spiritual discernment there is opened a new world, a world closed to those whose spiritual sensitivities are dulled.

5. Thou meetest him. Heaven is not far away from earth. God meets with those who are willing to meet with Him. Since God is a righteous and a holy God, and since wickedness constitutes rebellion against Him and against the principles of His kingdom, He walks in closeness of fellowship only with those who seek after righteousness.

Remember. Not only do they keep God in their conscious memory; they do that which a knowledge of God and of the divine way should lead men to do. The Hebrew word here translated “remember” allows such an extension of meaning.

In those is continuance. The Hebrew here is brief and obscure. Many reconstructions have been attempted. Some think that the reference is to a continuance of God’s mercy and saving grace to the penitent. Others believe that the pronoun “those” refers to Israel’s rebellion against God. With the latter sense the passage may be interpreted, “Behold, thou art wroth, for we have sinned and we have continued in our ways of sin, and can we thus hope to be saved?”

6. Unclean thing. Heb. *tame'*, an adjective meaning “unclean.” Standing by itself, as here, it may refer either to an unclean thing or to an “unclean person.” *Tame'* is the word that appears repeatedly throughout Leviticus describing ceremonial uncleanness. Left to himself, man cannot wash away the impurity of sin—he remains unclean.

Filthy rags. Literally, “as a menstruous garment.” Man’s best efforts produce, not righteousness, but imperfection. Only the robe of righteousness that Christ has provided will fit man to appear in the presence of God (see Gal. 2:16; COL 311).

Fade as a leaf. A leaf separated from a tree soon withers and dies. The same is true of a man without Christ. The effect of sin is death (Rom. 5:12; 6:23; James 1:15).

Like the wind. As the wind tears a leaf from a branch and carries it farther and farther from the parent tree, and thus from its source of life, so sin sweeps man farther and farther away from God and hurries him on toward death and destruction.

7. Hast consumed. Heb. *mug*, “to melt,” “to dissolve.” Following the reading *magan*, the LXX, Targums, and Syriac give the translation “hast delivered.” In point of time the prophet is envisioning the period of Babylonian captivity (see v. 10; cf. ch. 63:18; see on ch. 40:1).

8. But now, O Lord. This is a pathetic plea for mercy. Notwithstanding the widespread religious indifference (v. 7) and the desperate state into which the nation had come, God was still the Father of His people and in a position to help (see on ch. 63:16).

We are the clay. This prayer—by Isaiah on behalf of his people—indicates penitence and surrender. The spirit of stubborn resistance is gone, and there is a willingness to be molded into the image of God. See chs. 29:16; 45:9.

9. Be not wroth. The penitent in his pitiful cry for mercy humbly acknowledges his transgression and the right of the Lord to punish, but he pleads that God’s punishment may not last too long and that it may not be too severe (see Ps. 79:8; 103:8–10).

10. Zion is a wilderness. Verses 10, 11 picture further the desolation to come upon Judah and Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian invasions (see 2 Kings 25:2–10). The event was still future in Isaiah’s day, but the prophet describes the event as if it had already taken place (see Vol. I, pp. 27, 28). For further comment see on Isa. 40:1.

12. Wilt thou refrain? The prophet was saying in effect, “Art Thou not interested in this, Thy Temple, and in us, Thy people? Do none of these things move Thee? Shall our enemies and Thy enemies prevail? Is righteousness to perish and iniquity to triumph? Is this to be a victory for the forces of evil and a defeat for the cause of God?”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3PP 109

4 MH 425

4, 5 PK 253

6 COL 311; DA 174; MB 54; ML 311; SC 29; 2T 178, 553

8 MH 471; 8T 186

CHAPTER 65

1 *The calling of the Gentiles.* 2 *The Jews, for their incredulity, idolatry, and hypocrisy, are rejected.* 8 *A remnant shall be saved.* 11 *Judgments on the wicked, and blessings on the godly.* 17 *The blessed state of the new Jerusalem.*

1. I am sought. This verse has been understood in two ways. Inasmuch as Paul quotes the passage and applies it to the Gentiles (Rom. 10:20), many take his interpretation to be the primary intent of Isaiah’s statement as well. Others think that Isaiah at least primarily referred to Israel in Isa. 65:1 as well as in Isa. 65:2 (cf. Rom. 10:21).

Behold me. Heb. *hinneni*, which may also be translated “here am I.” For many years God continued to be patient with His people and gave them every opportunity to repent.

But when they continued to turn against His messengers they reached the place where “there was no remedy” (2 Chron. 36:16). Yet even the terrible judgments had a wise and merciful purpose.

Not called by my name. Better, “not calling upon my name.”

2. Spread out my hands. In entreaty and expostulation, or possibly in invitation.

Rebellious. From the Heb. *sarar*, “to be stubborn,” “to be rebellious.” *Sarar* is used to describe the attitude of the princes in ch. 1:23 and again in Hosea 9:15 (there translated “revolters”).

Thoughts. Heb. *machasheboth*, which may also be translated “devices,” as in Job 5:12; Ps. 33:10; Prov. 19:21; Jer. 11:19; etc. The evils of the world have resulted from men placing their own ideas before the plans and purposes of God.

3. That provoketh me. See Deut. 32:21; 2 Chron. 34:25. Verses 3–5 of Isa. 65 list a number of provocations by which the Jews brought about their downfall.

That sacrificeth in gardens. See Isa. 1:29; 57:5; 66:17; Eze. 20:28. The native inhabitants of Canaan carried on the most immoral forms of worship amidst beautiful gardens and groves, and the Hebrews frequently followed their example.

Upon altars of brick. Literally, “upon bricks.” Ancient Assyrian and Babylonian altars were generally constructed of stone. The Hebrews were instructed to use altars of earth, stone, or metal (see on Ex. 20:24). Altars of brick are not known. The reference here is probably to the tiled roofs of houses upon which the Jews, at least in Jeremiah’s time, offered incense unto the host of heaven (Jer. 19:13; cf. Jer. 32:29), or perhaps to the brick pavements of heathen shrines.

Dead Sea scroll 1QIs shows an interesting variation in this verse. Instead of “burneth incense upon altars of brick” there appears a clause whose meaning is not certain. The root of one of the words is not clear. One possibility is that the word comes from an Akkadian root meaning, “to pour out a drink offering.” The clause would then read, “Their hands pour out a drink offering upon the stones.” However, other derivations are possible; hence we are left in uncertainty regarding the exact nature of the pagan rite here referred to. The LXX also shows an interesting variation, with the reading, “they burn incense on bricks to devils, which exist not.”

4. Among the graves. Probably to carry on communication with the dead (Isa. 8:19, 20; cf. Deut. 18:10–12).

Monuments. Probably tombs in caves or chambers hewn out of the rock, such as were common in Palestine. The practice of necromancy in these places appears here to be denounced.

Swine’s flesh. The eating of this flesh was forbidden (Lev. 11:7; Deut. 14:8). The reference here is probably to the eating of sacrificial meals. The offering of swine’s flesh constituted part of a sacrilegious ceremony in the Maccabean period whereby a Jew solemnly renounced his religion (1 Macc 1:41–64; cf. 2 Macc 6:18, 19).

Abominable things. See Deut. 14:2, 3; cf. Eze. 4:14; Acts 10:13, 14.

5. Stand by thyself. There may be a reference here to renegade Jews who at times were initiated into heathen mysteries which it was thought produced a superior type of holiness. The lives of such men might be steeped in corruption, but they made lofty pretensions to holiness, regarding themselves as possessed of a special type of sanctity that was denied to their fellows.

A smoke. Such vain pretensions in the name of religion were offensive to God and constituted a continual provocation to Him.

6. It is written. Being thus placed on record, Israel's sins will not be forgotten but will receive their recompense. The deeds of all men, both good and bad, are recorded by angels in the registers of heaven, where they constitute a witness for or against them (see Ps. 56:8; Dan. 7:10; 12:1; Mal. 3:16; GC 481).

Keep silence. That is, He will not remain inactive. He will not forever restrain Himself.

Into their bosom. The picture is drawn from the ancient custom of receiving gifts in the fold of the cloak or garment (see Luke 6:38).

7. Upon the mountains. See 2 Kings 15:4, 35; Isa. 57:7; Eze. 6:13; 18:6; 20:27, 28; Hosea 4:13.

Blasphemed. Heb. *charaph*, "to rail at," "to revile."

Measure their former work. That is, God will requite them for their former deeds.

8. The new wine. The picture is that of a vineyard. The yield is mostly wild, sour grapes (see ch. 5:4). But the gatherers come across a cluster of good grapes capable of producing good wine, and the decree is issued, "Destroy it not." This illustrates the attitude of God toward His people. They have sinned, and judgment has been decreed upon them. But they are not all wicked, and not all are to be destroyed. Those who are righteous among them will be spared and restored to their land.

A blessing is in it. The wild, sour grapes are worthless, and fit only for destruction. The good grapes, providing nourishment for man, are a blessing from God.

9. A seed out of Jacob. A seed represents only a small portion of the plant that produced it. It may appear insignificant, but it is of the highest importance, for it possesses the capability of reproducing itself manyfold. Not all of Jacob and of Judah are to be saved, but only a remnant (chs. 1:9; 10:21; 11:11; 46:3).

My mountains. Palestine is a mountainous country and is fittingly represented by such a term (see Isa. 14:25; cf. Isa. 57:13; Eze. 36:1–8).

Mine elect. Or, "my chosen." God's elect are not a favored few arbitrarily selected by the Lord; they include all who choose to follow in God's ways of righteousness (see Isa. 43:20; 45:4; Matt. 24:22).

10. Sharon. A fertile plain along the seacoast extending from Carmel to Joppa. It was a region of beauty and plenty (ch. 35:2), a pastureland for flocks and herds (1 Chron. 27:29), and a place of flowers (S. of Sol. 2:1). God here promises to reward with prosperity and peace those who have "sought" Him.

The valley of Achor. Achor was a valley running into the plain of Jericho. It is traditionally connected with Achan, for it was there that he was stoned to death (Joshua 7:24–26). Here the name probably stands for the eastern limit of the country. All of Palestine, from Sharon on the west to Achor on the east, was to be a prosperous, peaceful region—the home of the people of the Lord. The "valley of Achor" would become "a door of hope" (Hosea 2:15).

11. That forsake the Lord. The prophet now turns his attention back to sinners and idolaters—the class that he had denounced in vs. 2, 3. In God's "holy mountain" was the "house of prayer" and the altar where men came to offer their sacrifices and worship God (ch. 56:7). Those who forgot God's holy mountain were, therefore, those who forgot the Lord and gave their homage to other divinities.

Troop. Heb. *Gad*, the name given to the god of fortune. The name Baal-gad in Joshua 11:17; 12:7 suggests the prevalence of this form of worship in Canaan at the time the Hebrews took over the territory. It was customary in ancient times to present a sacrifice to the gods and then to partake of the food thus offered, at a feast in honor of the god.

That furnish the drink offering. Literally, “that fill [cups of] mixed wine.”

That number. Heb. *Meni*, believed to be the name of some Palestinian deity. The name means “destiny.”

12. Number you to the sword. Or, “destine you to the sword.” The Hebrew verb here employed (*manah*) is the root of the name *Meni* (see on v. 11).

When I called. Compare vs. 1, 2. The people had been disturbed over the fact that when they needed help and called upon God, He did not answer (chs. 63:15; 64:12). However, the blame for their plight rested with them, not God. The people had destroyed themselves by their own impenitence (Hosea 13:9).

13. My servants shall eat. Verses 13–15 list a series of contrasts between the faithful in Israel and those who had rebelled against God. His children will have their wants supplied, while those who set a table for heathen gods will suffer for want of food (see chs. 3:1; 8:21).

14. Ye shall cry. The time was coming when those who had made merry in deeds of iniquity and had engaged in riotous feasts in honor of the heathen gods would cry and howl for the miseries that would come upon them, while those who were faithful to God would rejoice (see chs. 2:11–21; 35:6–10).

15. Your name. Compare Jer. 29:22. The name of these apostate Jews would be used in formulas of imprecation.

Shall slay thee. See v. 12.

Another name. See on ch. 62:2. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs has an extended omission here running into v. 16. It leaves out the words “and call his servants by another name: that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself,” and substitutes the word “continually,” making the last clause of v. 15 read, “for the Lord God shall slay thee continually.” At the beginning of v. 16 it adds the words, “and it shall be that the one blessing himself,” making the first part of v. 16 read, “and it shall be that the one swearing by the God of truth and swearing in the earth shall swear by the God of truth.” Interestingly, the scribe left a blank space of nearly a line in his manuscript. He was apparently copying from a defective manuscript and this represents his attempt to emend or to restore the text.

16. The God of truth. Literally, “the God of Amen,” that is, “the God of faithfulness.” The LXX reads “the genuine God,” thus contrasting Him with the pagan deities.

Forgotten. See on v. 17.

17. I create. In vs. 17–25 Isaiah describes new heavens and a new earth that would have been brought about should Israel heed the messages of the prophets and fulfill the divine purpose following the restoration from captivity. Israel failed; hence, in secondary application, these verses point forward to the new heavens and the new earth to be ushered in at the close of the millennium. However, the description should be understood first in terms of its local setting, and secondary application be made only in the light of what the NT writers and the Spirit of prophecy have to say regarding the future life (see

pp. 35–38). When such a principle of interpretation is followed, the passage presents no problems. However, if attempts are made to apply all details of the passage to the future new heavens and new earth, several difficulties present themselves: (1) According to v. 20, unless the language is to be understood in a highly metaphorical sense, death is still present (see on v. 20), whereas in the heaven and earth of which John speaks there will be no death (Rev. 21:4). (2) According to Isa. 65:23 (see comments there) children are still being born. In the heavens and earth to which we look forward those who are “accounted worthy to obtain that world ... neither marry, nor are given in marriage” (Luke 20:35). The comment on this passage is too clear to be misapplied, “There are men to-day who express their belief that there will be marriages and births in the new earth, but those who believe the Scriptures cannot accept such doctrines” (MM 99). (3) According to Isa. 66:23, 24 worshipers on the way to Jerusalem view the carcasses of those who have transgressed against God, whereas according to Rev. 20–22 the fires of the last day completely renovate the earth before it becomes the home of the redeemed.

These difficulties are fully removed when the passage is interpreted according to the principles outlined on pp. 25–38.

The failure of Israel made impossible the fulfillment of these prophecies according to the original intent. Nevertheless the purposes of Jehovah will move forward to their complete fulfillment (see PK 705, 706). There will be new heavens and a new earth, but the manner in which they will be ushered in is somewhat different now that the purposes of God, instead of being accomplished through Israel, the chosen nation, will be accomplished through the Christian church (see PK 713, 714).

The former. These would include the “former troubles” (v. 16), the tribulations of the Captivity, or for us, the hardships of this present evil world. The peace and glory of the new earth will so far transcend the trouble and woe of this present world that the trials will seem like nothing in comparison (see Jer. 3:16; EW 17; cf. Isa. 43:18, 19).

Some have felt that the prophet here predicts a future oblivion concerning things on this earth, at least concerning past sins. The Hebrew of this verse need not be so understood. *Zakar*, translated “remembered,” frequently defines the action or condition that results from conscious memory. For example, the statement that the children of Israel “remembered not the Lord their God” (Judges 8:34) does not mean that God never entered their conscious mind. It simply means that the people did not render unto Jehovah the worship that a knowledge of Him should have led them to render (see on Judges 8:34). If such a shade of meaning is to be attached to Isaiah’s statement, then the passage may be understood to assert that a memory of former things will no longer distress or annoy the mind or cause feelings of remorse.

In that world of tomorrow “all the perplexities of life’s experience will ... be made plain” (Ed 305). When we no longer “see through a glass, darkly” (1 Cor. 13:12) we shall have a “distinct, intelligent knowledge” of what our salvation has cost (GC 651). A knowledge of the history of the great controversy will be the safeguard against any future repetition of the evil experiment of sin (GC 499).

Come into mind. Literally, “come upon the heart”.

18. Be ye glad. Even today we can rejoice in the thought of the joys and glories of the world to come. The pictures of a new and better world give strength and courage as we meet the trials of the present. Disappointments and discouragements will be met with better grace if our hearts are set on the abounding joys of the new earth, which is soon to

become our home. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs has the two imperatives in the singular, “be thou glad” and “rejoice thou.” However, the ancient versions support the Masoretic text.

19. Rejoice in Jerusalem. At the time of Isaiah there was little reason for rejoicing over Jerusalem. The armies of Sennacherib came against the city, and the Assyrian king boasted of having shut up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage (see on 2 Kings 18:13). When the Babylonian envoys visited Hezekiah, Isaiah foresaw the time when the armies of Babylon would come against Jerusalem and carry away its treasures and its people (ch. 39:6, 7). Micah, Isaiah’s contemporary, foresaw the time when Zion would be “plowed as a field” and Jerusalem and its Temple would be destroyed (Micah 3:12). But the Lord was planning a glorious future for Jerusalem (Isa. 52:9; 62:1, 7). The city might have been established as the great metropolis of the earth. She might have been “the world’s diadem of glory” (DA 577; see p. 30). But when the Jews rejected the Messiah, Jerusalem’s day of grace ended (Matt. 23:37, 38; DA 578). However, the new Israel of God looks to the heavenly Jerusalem as the fulfillment of its joy.

20. Infant of days. That is, an infant who dies being but a few days old. Many expositors have been greatly perplexed over this verse inasmuch as it presupposes the continuance of death and sin at a time when they believe these would have been abolished. The perplexity has been expressed thus: “What is most remarkable in the description is that death and sin are represented as still continuing” (Pulpit). The answer to this problem has already been given (see on v. 17). Isaiah describes the new heavens and the new earth in terms of how these conditions would have been brought about with respect to the nation of Israel.

The resurrection and state of immortality would have been preceded by a period in which adherence to the laws of God and cooperation with the divine program would have largely banished sickness and premature death. It is this feature that Isaiah emphasizes in this present verse. His language is poetic, but the general meaning seems clear. His first point of observation is with regard to infant mortality. There would be no infant deaths.

Filled his days. That is, there would be no premature deaths. Old men would not die until they had lived out their allotted span.

Child. Heb. *na’ar*, “a lad,” “a youth.” The third group, the youth, is now mentioned. The statement concerning them parallels those concerning the other groups. The young people, too, would not die until they had lived out the allotted span. The span is here placed at 100 years. Why this particular figure was chosen is not made clear. It was doubtless a round number, and in the time of Isaiah represented a figure well above the average span of life. According to Ps. 90:10, of which Moses is thought to have been the author, man’s span was 70 years. A few attained to 80 years. Of the kings of Judah from Rehoboam to Jehoiakim whose approximate length of life can be calculated, the average age at death was about 47 years. An age of 100 years for Isaiah’s contemporaries would thus be considerably above the age that the average man hoped to reach.

The promises here made to Israel on the condition that they would cooperate with the divine program may be compared with the promises to them at the time of the Exodus. At that time the Lord promised to take away all sickness (Deut. 7:15). Upon the fulfillment of the “conditions,” the promise was verified to them. “There was not one feeble person among their tribes” (Ps. 105:37; see further COL 288). The same promises of longevity and immunity from suffering were now once again offered Israel, and upon the same conditions.

The conditions here described—a spiritually revived Israel at last working in harmony with Heaven’s plan, and inheriting a once more productive Palestine (Isa. 65:9, 10)—would have preceded the final eradication of sin and sinners, the resurrection, and subsequent immortality for the righteous. Isaiah is setting forth the steps leading up to these final events as they would have been fulfilled to the nation of Israel.

With the failure of Israel and the consequent fulfillment of these promises in the Christian church (PK 713, 714), certain features will be altered, but the final climatic event—the new heavens and the new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness—is still the blessed hope of the saints today (2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1, 2). For this the church has long prayed (Matt. 6:10).

Some have understood the clause, “the child shall die an hundred years old,” to mean that at the age of 100 a man would be regarded as a mere youth. They believe that the comparison is with conditions in this world before the Flood: “Men before the flood lived many hundreds of years, and when one hundred years old were considered but youths” (4SG 156). However, the use of the word “die” (Heb. *muth*) to describe the transition from youth to adulthood would be most unusual. Since the passage can be understood without difficulty by ascribing to *muth* its normal meaning, it seems better to avoid an involved and uncertain interpretation of the word.

Accursed. In contrast with the blessings enjoyed by the righteous, the sinner, even should he attain to old age, would be accursed.

21. Build houses. Through premature death, invasion, and deportation the Israelites had lost their homes, their fields, and vineyards. Settlement in the restored state was no more to be interrupted by these. In the new heavens and new earth now soon to be established, occupancy will not be interrupted even by death. Life in the new earth will to a large degree be similar to the life that man lived in Paradise before the entrance of sin. In the world made new there will be all the comforts and delights of Eden of old. There will be trees and flowers and streams, delicious fruits, and beautiful homes. The world will be man’s to enjoy, to erect for himself the kind of home that he wills, and, with the humble heart of a learner, to hold converse with nature and nature’s God.

22. Days of a tree. A tree is a symbol of fixity and permanence. Compare ch. 40:6.

Work of their hands. Life in the new earth will not be an idle existence. Men will labor and they will enjoy the fruits of their labors. Work there will be a comfort and a source of endless delight. The saints will plan homes and gardens and they will have the time and the means to carry out their plans.

23. Bring forth. Heb. *yalad*, “to bring forth children” (see MM 99).

Trouble. Heb. *behalah*, “sudden terror.” *Behalah* occurs also in Lev. 26:16; Ps. 78:33; Jer. 15:8. Women would not beget children to be cut off by disease, disaster, or war.

Offspring with them. The picture is that of a large, happy, and prosperous patriarchal family. They live together in peace, and work together for the common good. They are all children of a common Father, and thus all are brethren, and all have the same interests at heart.

24. Before they call. In their sin and distress the Israelites had called upon God, but they believed Him to be far away, and indifferent to their cries and to their dire need (chs. 40:27; 49:14; 63:15; 64:12). But God had plainly told them that it was because of their

sins that He could not hear their prayers (chs. 1:15; 59:1–3). Now, with hearts renewed by divine grace, sending up petitions according to the will of God, there would be no delay in response. Even before His children would express their wishes and call upon Him, God would anticipate their requests and provide everything that could add to their well-being and happiness.

25. *The wolf and the lamb.* See on ch. 11:6–8.

Serpent's meat. See on Gen. 3:14.

Shall not hurt. See on ch. 11:9.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 AA 375

5 COL 150; GW 336; TM 186; 4T 257; 5T 342

6, 7 GC 481

8 DA 149; MH 333; Te 97

17 PK 732

18, 19 PK 729

19 CH 338; Ed 271; GC 676; SR 431; TM 414

21, 22 Ed 303; GC 675; ML 358; PK 731

25 Ed 304; EW 18; ML 354; 1T 68

CHAPTER 66

1 *The glorious God will be served in humble sincerity. 5 He comforteth the humble with the marvellous generation, 10 and with the gracious benefits of the church. 15 God's severe judgments against the wicked. 19 The Gentiles shall have an holy church. 24 and see the damnation of the wicked.*

1. *My throne.* Compare Ps. 11:4; 103:19; Matt. 5:34, 35; see on 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chron. 2:6; 6:18.

My footstool. See on Ps. 99:5.

2. *All those things.* Heaven and earth and all created things are the handiwork of God (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 8:3; 33:6, 9; John 1:3). God sustains the earth and the entire universe by His mighty power. He is not dependent for a place of residence upon any structure built by man. Such structures have their place, but apart from a humble, contrite, and obedient spirit on the part of those who worship there, they lose their significance (see on Isa. 57:15).

3. *Killeth an ox.* The Hebrew of this passage is very brief, and several interpretations are possible. There is no connective between the phrases; for example, the first unit reads, “the slaughterer of the ox the slayer of a man.” The connective supplied by the KJV, “as if,” and that supplied by the RSV, “like,” are based on the reading of the LXX and the Targums. Translated in this way the meaning would be that without the corresponding spiritual experience the offerer of an ox would be no more pleasing in the sight of God than a murderer. The other combination of phrases would express similar comparisons.

It is possible, however, to supply the connective “is” thus, “He that slaughtereth an ox is a murderer,” etc. This gives the meaning that those who came to worship God with oxen, lambs, oblations (cereal offerings), incense, were at the same time committing murder and engaging in idolatrous rites (see ch. 65:3–7).

Their own ways. The thought in this verse is related to that in the following verse. As these people have chosen their own wicked ways, God will “choose” punishments for them suitable to their iniquities.

4. Delusions. Heb. *ta'alulim*, from the root *'alal*, which in one of its forms means "to deal severely with." Probably a better meaning of *ta'alulim* is "severe treatment", "affliction" (RSV). Yet in the severe treatment that came upon Judah the Lord had a wise and merciful purpose, as He did with the ten tribes. What He could not accomplish through them in their own land, He would accomplish by scattering them among their heathen neighbors (PK 292).

5. Ye that tremble. Isaiah turns from the wicked hypocrites to the righteous remnant. The lot of the latter has not been easy. They have been despised and persecuted by false brethren. The proud and self-righteous hypocrites have taunted them for their piety and devotion. But the prophet points out that the tables will be turned, that doom will be the lot of the mockers and joy and deliverance will be the lot of the righteous.

He shall appear. Literally, "we shall see." According to the Masoretic reading this clause forms a part of the taunt: "Let the Lord be glorified and we will see your joy." The translation "he shall appear" requires a change in the Hebrew. However, Dead Sea scroll 1QIs clearly reads, "he shall appear."

6. A voice of noise. The prophet's mind is projected forward to the time of the restoration. Isaiah envisions the city and the Temple restored and the Lord rising up to render recompense to the enemies of the new state (see on Isa. 59:16–18).

7. Before she travailed. Zion is personified as a travailing woman. The land of Israel, which had long been desolate (Eze. 38:8), would suddenly, with the return of the multitude of exiles, throb with new life.

8. In one day. It is a thing unheard of and incredible that a nation could come into existence so suddenly. If the Jews in exile had heeded the message of the prophets, the restoration would have been as dramatic and as glorious as here described.

9. Not cause to bring forth. The seriousness of God's purpose is here emphasized. Israel's failure to fulfill the divine purpose was not due to any deficiency of divine grace. Nor will God permit the temporary failure of Israel to frustrate the "plan of the ages for the redemption of mankind" (PK 705, 706). The heavenly Jerusalem, "the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26), will be populated by the nations of the saved (see on Isa. 54:1).

10. Ye that mourn. Compare chs. 57:18; 61:2, 3.

11. Milk out. Verses 11, 12 continue the picture of Jerusalem as the mother of the newly born nation. All the attentions of a devoted mother for her child are freely bestowed.

12. Peace. Or, "prosperity", "success" (see on Isa. 57:19).

Like a river. See ch. 48:18.

Glory. Heb. *kabod*, here probably meaning "wealth", as in chs. 10:3; 61:6. On the wealth of the Gentiles see on ch. 60:5.

Upon her sides. Compare ch. 60:4. In Oriental countries children are often carried on the mother's hip.

13. Comforteth. Compare ch. 49:15.

14. Shall rejoice. Doubtless a reference to the taunt of the mockers referred to in ch. 65:5.

Bones shall flourish. In times of trouble bones are described as being "consumed" (Ps. 31:10; cf. Lam. 1:13), or in sickness as "burned with heat" (Job 30:30).

Toward his servants. The same contrast is expressed as in v. 5 (see comments there).

15. The Lord will come. The true restoration of Israel would have meant death for the apostates and wicked. So the second coming of Christ will bring deliverance to the saints and death to the wicked (Rev. 19:19–21).

16. Plead. From the Heb. *shaphat*, “to judge.” Dead Sea scroll 1QIs here reads: “For with fire Jehovah will come to judge, and with his sword all flesh.”

The description in ch. 66, as that in ch. 65 (see on ch. 65:17), is in terms of what would have taken place if the Jews had chosen to fulfill the divine purpose. Hence the abominations here mentioned are specifically those of which the apostate Jews were guilty.

17. Sanctify themselves. These apostates mingled heathen rites with the worship of Jehovah and then took a “I am holier than thou” (ch. 65:5) attitude toward their brethren. The reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh were strikingly characterized by such worship (2 Kings 16:10–16; 21:2–7). The consecration and purification ceremonies referred to were probably initiatory rites into heathen mysteries.

In the gardens. These gardens and groves were frequently the scene of cruel and immoral religious ceremonies. The Hebrews often followed the heathen in worshiping in such places (Isa. 1:29; 65:3, 4; cf. 1 Kings 14:23; 15:13; 2 Kings 16:3, 4; 17:9–11; 18:4), although they had been commanded by God to destroy them (Ex. 34:13; Deut. 7:5).

Behind one tree. The word “tree” is supplied. The reference may be to some abominable and revolting object of worship. The Heb. *’achad*, “one,” is masculine in the common Hebrew text, but feminine in several manuscripts, among which are both Dead Sea scrolls of Isaiah. It remains uncertain to what the “one” refers.

Eating swine’s flesh. See on ch. 65:4. These people openly defied God by partaking of things that were particularly abominable to Him. Both the swine and the mouse are listed among the unclean animals the Hebrews were forbidden to eat (Lev. 11:2, 7, 29, 44). The Jewish apostates exulted in throwing off all restraints and pretended to sanctify themselves by the very things God had said would defile them and render them unfit for fellowship with Him. In their affectation of a superior sanctity they had sunk to the lowest depths of degradation.

Shall be consumed. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs omits this verb, probably the result of a scribal error. The destruction has already been mentioned in vs. 15, 16.

18. I know. The verb is not in the Hebrew, but the LXX has *epistamai*, “to understand,” “to know.” The Targums here read, “and before me are their deeds and their thoughts revealed.”

It shall come. The LXX reads, “I am coming.”

See my glory. That is, a revelation of God’s character, here perhaps that aspect revealed in the destruction of the sinners.

19. Set a sign. Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “set signs.” What this “sign” is or what these “signs” were is not disclosed. The phrase “set a sign” is probably parallel to “see my glory.” Having seen God’s “glory,” or “sign,” those who escaped destruction would declare to the nations what had been revealed to them concerning God.

Tarshish. Generally identified with *Tartessus* in Spain (see on Gen. 10:4).

Pul. This place is not definitely known, but it is thought to represent an African place or people. Some think Pul is a misspelling of Put (see on Eze. 27:10). However, Dead Sea scroll 1QIs reads “Pul.”

Lud. A region in Mesopotamia or in Asia Minor (see on Gen. 10:13, 22).

Tubal. A Japhetic tribe living near the Black Sea (see on Eze. 38:2).

Javan. The usual Hebrew name for the Ionians, or Greeks (see on Gen. 10:2).

Isles. Or, “coastlands”. The places named represent far-off lands in general that had not before heard of the God of Israel, but were now to know Him through the preaching of the envoys.

20. Your brethren. The exiles still scattered abroad.

In chariots. Here are listed the various types of transportation in use in the ancient East. By every available means men from every race and clime would make their way to Zion.

My holy mountain Jerusalem. See on ch. 2:2–4.

In a clean vessel. In contrast to the “broth of abominable things” brought in vessels by a “rebellious people” (chs. 65:2, 4; 66:16, 17).

21. Priests and for Levites. At this stage in the restoration the ceremonial law would still have been in force (see on Eze. 40:1).

22. The new heavens. See on ch. 65:17.

23. One new moon to another. On the ritual of the new moon under Mosaic law see Num. 10:10; 28:11–14; cf. Amos 8:5. On the importance of the new moon in the time of Israel’s restoration see Eze. 46:1, 3.

One sabbath to another. The Sabbath is an eternal institution. It would have been rightly honored in the restored Jewish state, and in the new earth to come it will be observed by all (see DA 283). All will observe the Sabbath in eternal recognition of Christ as the Creator of the world in its Edenic bliss, and as the re-Creator of the new heavens and the new earth of righteousness and holiness.

24. Look upon the carcasses. Better, “look upon the corpses.” This verse must be understood in the light of the principles outlined in comments on Isa. 65:17. The language is further evidence that Isaiah’s description is in terms of how the new heavens and earth would have been established if the nation of the Jews had accepted its divine destiny. Before the new earth of which John speaks (Rev. 21; 22) becomes the abode of the righteous and worshipers journey to the New Jerusalem, every trace of sin will have been removed and no dead bodies will remain to mar the perfection of that Eden restored (see 2 Peter 3:10). Hence Isaiah’s words must not be taken to apply directly to the future new earth state. Secondary application must be made in harmony with the statements of later inspired writers who have informed us how God’s eternal purposes will be accomplished through the Christian church (see pp. 37, 38).

Those who apply this verse to the eternal punishment of souls in an ever-burning hell do well to note that it is corpses that are being observed, not sentient, disembodied souls in torment. Such a misapplication of the prophecy also ignores the principles noted above.

Worm. Heb. *tole‘ah*, here probably the maggot. The same Hebrew word is used in Ex. 16:20; Job 25:6; Ps. 22:6; Isa. 14:11. The picture is that of maggots preying upon the dead bodies.

Shall not die. By the same misapplication noted above some have understood this expression as figuratively denoting endless life for the wicked. However, the expression in the Hebrew is a simple imperfect, a tense that denotes incomplete action and merely means that at the point of time under consideration the action of the verb is not yet

complete. The tense does not necessarily imply that the action will never be completed. For example, the imperfect tense is employed in Gen. 2:25 in the statement concerning Adam and Eve that they “were not ashamed.” The statement was not a prediction that they would never be ashamed. That they later were ashamed is definitely implied in Gen. 3:7. A suggested translation of the Hebrew tense that conveys this shade of meaning is “their worm had not died yet.”

Quenched. The Hebrew tense here is the same as in the expression “their worm shall not die.” Hence the clause may be translated, “their fire has not yet been quenched” (see above under, “shall not die”). That the expression, “neither shall their fire be quenched,” does not mean fires that will burn forever is evident from the prediction in Jer. 17:27, where Jerusalem is threatened with such a conflagration. The fires were kindled (2 Chron. 36:19), but they have long since burned out. Unquenchable fires are simply fires that no one will, or can, quench. However, when they have consumed that upon which they prey they naturally go out.

The Bible thus clearly defines fires that shall not be “quenched.” It may further be observed that the Hebrew of Isa. 66:24 is poetic in form and that the expressions “their worm shall not die” and “neither shall their fire be quenched” are parallel. The meaning of the second expression, which is clearly defined, thus suggests the interpretation that ought to be given to the first.

On Jesus’ use and application of the words of Isa. 66:24 see on Mark 9:44.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1, 2 DA 437; FE 371; 6T 184
- 2 FE 451; GW 177; TM 207, 250
- 3, 4 8T 249
- 5 EW 13; GC 372; LS 53; SR 361; 1T 44
- 8 Ev 579
- 10 PK 729
- 12 PK 374
- 13 CS 17; Ed 245
- 19 PK 374
- 22, 23 ML 364
- 23 DA 283, 770; PK 733; 6T 368
- 24 EW 294

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¹¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 60:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.